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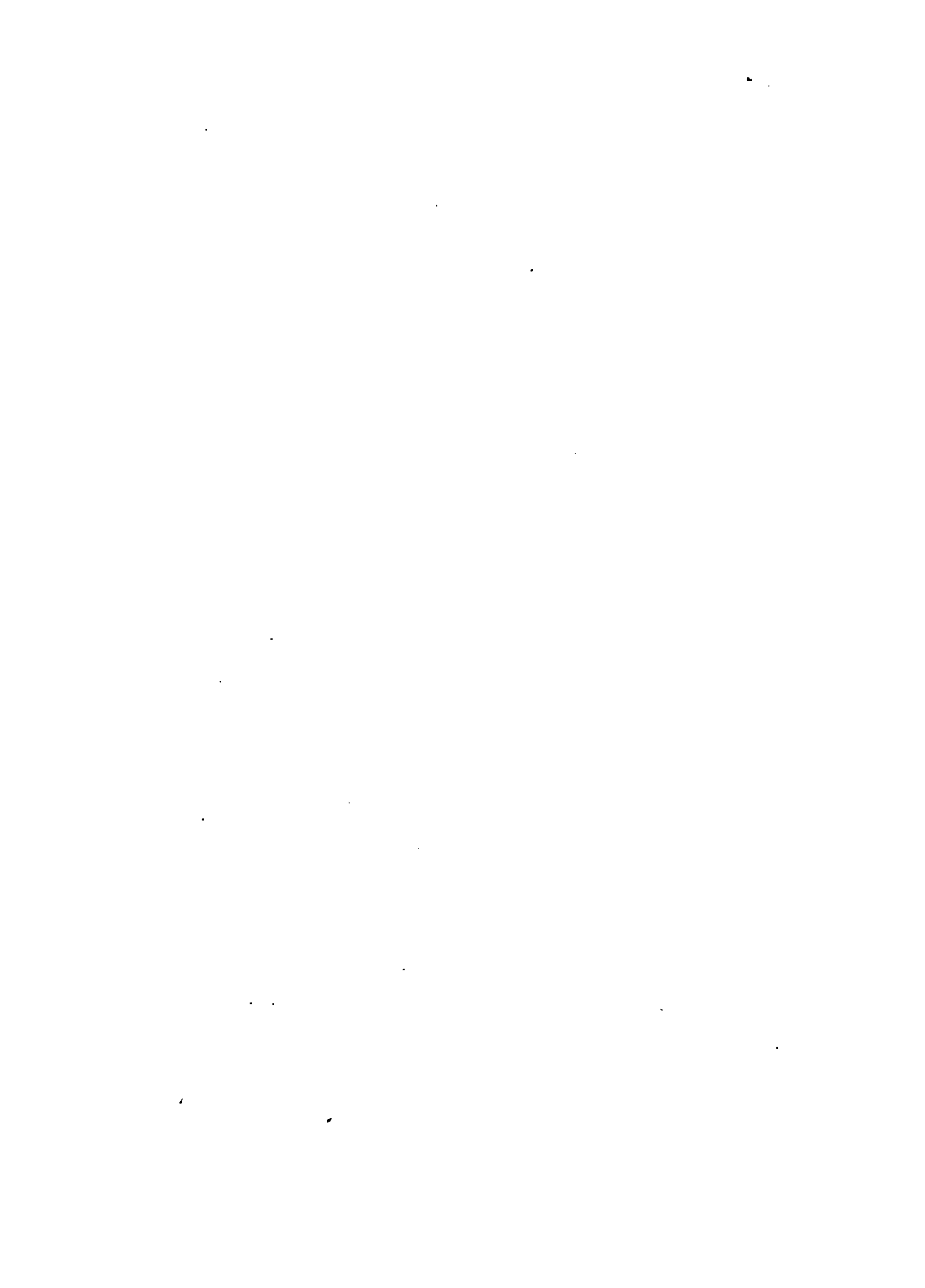


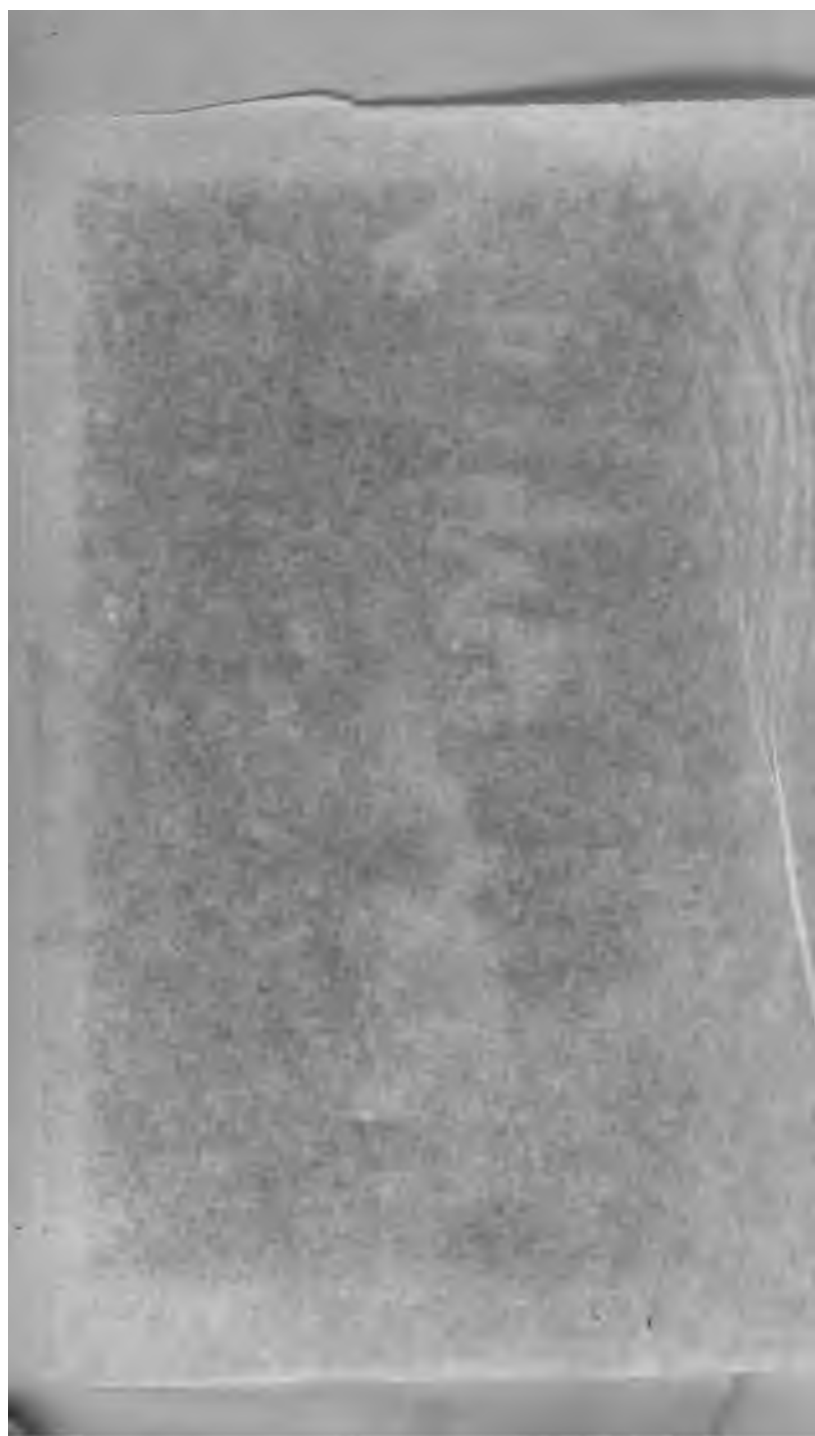
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VALLEY OF THE BLACK HILLS. IN THE ATLAS.





# ALGERIA AND TUNIS

IN 1845.

BY

CAPTAIN J. CLARK KENNEDY,

18<sup>TH</sup> (ROYAL IRISH) REGIMENT.

AN ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY  
MADE THROUGH THE TWO REGENCIES  
BY  
VISCOUNT FEILDING AND CAPT. KENNEDY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
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1846.

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TO THE  
VISCOUNT FEILDING,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES,

A SLIGHT MEMORIAL OF THE SCENES WE VISITED TOGETHER,

ARE DEDICATED BY

HIS SINCERE AND ATTACHED FRIEND,

J. CLARK KENNEDY.

LONDON,  
*March, 2, 1846.*





## PREFACE.

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HAVING passed some months of the winter in Paris, I had heard much on the subject of Algeria, and, being desirous of judging for myself, I made arrangements for spending a portion of the period of my leave of absence in Northern Africa. By the advice of officers who had served in Algeria, I delayed my journey until the beginning of March, and, passing the interval at Nice, I was there joined by Lord Feilding, and we made the excursion together.

In the following narrative of our travels I have entered neither into political discussions, nor into crude theories on what may be the future condition of the southern coast of the

Mediterranean ; I have merely endeavoured to describe what I saw, and to record a portion of the information collected in the course of our journey.

Some of the details may possibly be deemed trivial ; but it is often in the petty occurrences of every-day life that the character of a people may be studied to greater advantage than in the more serious events where the fiercer passions play their part, and which, when roused, give the same colouring to the actions of the civilized European, the wild Arab of the desert, or the still ruder savage.

If I have succeeded in transferring to the reader any portion of the interest that we experienced in traversing a country at present so little known, and which once played no inconsiderable part in the history of the world —my object will have been attained.

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# ALGERIA AND TUNIS

IN 1845.

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## CHAPTER I.

Arrival at Marseilles—Preparations for a voyage—Phénicien steamer—Algiers from the sea—Bombarded by the English in 1816—Landing—Place de Gouvernement—Gay scene—Explosion of a magazine—Contradictory rumours—Many lives lost—Fate of Madame \*\*\*—Probable cause of the explosion—Streets—Speculation—Walk through the upper town—The Kasbah—The interior—“Coup de chasse-mouche”—Harem and treasury.

LEAVING Nice early on the morning of the 3rd of March, we arrived at Marseilles the afternoon of the next day; and having secured our berths in the African steamer which was to sail for Algiers on the 5th, at five P.M., we were fully employed until that

time in making the final arrangements for the journey we had in contemplation.

Our baggage was reduced to the smallest possible compass, every thing not absolutely necessary being left in Marseilles; our passports were *visés*, the final effort undergone to remember if any thing had been left behind or forgotten, and every article, from "Gay Lussac's" mountain barometer to the portable cooking apparatus, having successively passed in mental review, we embarked at the hour appointed on board the "Phénicien." After waiting some time for the mail, delayed by bad weather in the interior, we put to sea at seven o'clock, with a brisk breeze blowing in our teeth, a heavy sea on, and the prospect before us of a rough and tedious passage.

Like most of the French steamers, the engines of the "Phénicien" had not sufficient power to enable her to make much way against a head wind; but being a good sea-boat, this did not signify so much, as it was easily remedied by patience, a virtue which, however, was not possessed by an elderly Frenchman in the next cabin, who,

between the paroxysms of sea-sickness, occupied his time in pitying himself, swearing as only a Parisian can swear, and asking the steward when we should arrive.

Passing to the eastward of Minorca, we made the African coast on the 8th, at mid-day, and after a passage of nearly three days, fifty hours being the usual time in moderate weather, we entered the harbour of Algiers at half past four in the afternoon.

Few cities have a more striking appearance than Algiers, when approached from the sea. Situated on the western side of the bay, the city is built on the steep slope of a hill, in the form of a triangle, the base of which rests on the Mediterranean; and when seen at such a distance that the eye cannot master the details, appears an immense cone of the whitest marble rising from the sea, and contrasting beautifully with the dark masses of the surrounding country. The mole, stretching from the shore in the shape of a T, surmounted by a lighthouse, and bristling with cannon, forms with its southern arm a secure harbour, still further defended by the triple tiers of the batteries

on the mainland, and is justly an object of pride to Englishmen, as the scene of an action rarely equalled in the annals of naval warfare for boldness and daring, and where the result of Lord Exmouth's expedition,—not glorious to the British fleet only, but to the cause of humanity in general,—so fully realised the object. Here, under these batteries, Christian slavery, which to the disgrace of Christian Europe had existed in the states of Barbary for nearly eleven centuries, received its death-blow in August 1816.

From the shore the buildings rise terrace above terrace to the summit of the city, where the Kasbah, the ancient palace and citadel of the deys, forms the apex of the triangle. The monotony of the Moorish houses, flat roofed and glaring with white-wash, is somewhat broken by the new French buildings in the lower part of the town, by the domes and towers of the mosques, and by the graceful forms of the cypress and palm, a few of which having escaped destruction, still stand in the courts of the larger mansions—silent witnesses of

the events that have changed the dull repose of the harem garden, into the lively bustle of a French barrack-yard. Outside the walls, Fort de l'Empereur, situated on a higher point of the ridge, and commanding the Kasbah, rises to the south ; the hills, gently sloping to the sea, are studded with country-houses and gardens ; and in the extreme distance are seen the lofty range of the lesser Atlas, whose highest summits, still capped with snow, form an appropriate back-ground to the scene.

At the landing-place there was the usual amount of noise and confusion ; half naked Arab boys and dirty Jews wrangling for our baggage, and only for an instant interrupting their mutual torrent of Arabic abuse, to recommend themselves in broken French to our notice. Every thing must have an end, and in this case the point was at last settled by the strongest marching off to the custom-house, where, excepting a little demur about our guns, we had no trouble ; and from thence, entering the city by the Marine Gate and traversing a broad and handsome street of the same name, we

reached the Hotel de la Regence, not sorry to find ourselves again on shore, with the comfortable prospect of an immovable dinner-table, stationary decanters, and dishes that kept their own places.

At dinner we had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of the Count de Goltz, a Prussian officer of cuirassiers, who had arrived in Algeria the preceding day, and our objects of travel being nearly similar, acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy, and our accidental meeting was the forerunner of many agreeable days, passed in each others society, in a land equally new and interesting to the one as to the other.

The evening was fine, although cold, and after dinner we joined the crowd of idlers in the "Place de Gouvernement," an open space in the centre of the city, planted with orange trees, the formation of which was one of the first works undertaken by the French after the occupation. Three sides are nearly enclosed with handsome well-built houses in the French style, and the fourth facing the sea, juts out in an obtuse angle, of which a portion of the northern

face is occupied by a mosque of no architectural beauty, and the other, overlooking a battery of heavy guns, affords a splendid view of the port, the shipping, and the Bay of Algiers. In the Place are the principal hotels, the fashionable cafés, and the best shops. As the night closed in, the cafés blazed with light, and the square was thronged with officers, soldiers, sailors, Jews, Moors, Arabs, the wealthy merchant and the poor colonist, the freed negro, the awkward conscript of the last "tirage," and the handsome dragoon in the soldierlike uniform of the "Chasseurs d'Afrique" mingled together in a scene of picturesque confusion, each following his own method, in search of pleasure after the toils of the past day.

This scene of gaiety was, however, soon to change; at ten o'clock we left the Café de la Perle, and lingering near the entrance with the sound of the music still ringing in our ears, were startled by a bright flash in the direction of the harbour, a sheet of flame rose into the air, instantaneously followed by a loud explosion, and then several smaller ones in rapid succession; the ground



shook as with an earthquake, and broken glass from the windows facing the sea fell in showers around us. For a few seconds a dead silence reigned ; the crowd seemed paralyzed,—not a word was spoken,—each looked round upon his neighbours as if seeking information from those as ignorant as himself. Then with one impulse, as if the spell that had held the crowd motionless had been suddenly broken, a rush was made towards the harbour.

Every body spoke at once ; a hundred wonderful and contradictory rumours passed from mouth to mouth with extraordinary rapidity,—“ Abd-el-Kader and the Arabs are attacking the city,” cried one. “ It is an earthquake.” “ No, no, it is the English, it is ‘ la perfide Albion,’ ” exclaimed another, “ who, according to her usual custom, has, without declaring war, seized upon the harbour and the fleet.” “ Nonsense,” answered another, “ I tell you the great magazine on the Mole has exploded, and the lighthouse, the arsenal, the admiralty, the admiral and all his staff are blown up.”

This last report, although greatly exag-

gerated, unfortunately proved to be but too true ; upwards of a hundred fellow beings had in a few seconds been hurried unwarned into the presence of their God. Lord Feilding having been separated in the confusion from Count de Goltz and myself was one of the first who reached the scene, and met the survivors of this sad event ; officers, soldiers and sailors, mixed with ladies, some dressed for an evening party, and others risen from their beds, with infants in their arms, as they had rushed from the neighbouring houses in the first impulse of terror : the moans of the wounded, alas ! but few in number, were mingled with the screams of the frightened children ; wives were seeking their husbands, parents their children, and friends each other ; no one knew who had perished, or who had escaped, and in some cases this dreadful uncertainty lasted until morning ; members of the same family having in the darkness and confusion taken refuge in different houses.

Next morning on visiting the scene, we found that a large building, situated between the admiralty and the light house, was a

heap of ruins; blocks of stone, huge beams, and masses of masonry confusedly thrown together, the portions of the walls that were still standing, cracked in various places; the houses occupied by the flag captain and the captain of the port much damaged, the sides nearest the explosion blown down; the lantern of the "phare" broken, and the admiralty slightly damaged.

During this and many succeeding days the troops were busily employed searching for the bodies, many of which were not discovered for some time; one poor wretch was found alive amid the ruins on the fourth day, and in one long room, used as an artillery barrack, and containing rows of beds on either side, nearly fifty bodies were found lying in death, as they had laid them down to sleep, and in the centre the crushed and disfigured remains of a party engaged at play, the stakes before them and the cards still firmly grasped in their stiffened hands.

The fate of Madame \* \* \*, the wife of the port captain, was most melancholy. Whilst in the midst of her friends, who to the number of thirty, were that evening col-

lected at her house, she heard her child crying in the adjoining room, she hastened to soothe it, and on crossing the passage, from one door to the other, the explosion took place : she was killed instantaneously ; her child in one room, and her husband and friends in the other escaping unhurt. The daughter of Madame P \* \* \*, a little girl between four and five years of age, was asleep in a room, part of the roof of which was blown down, she was taken out of bed and carried from the port to the Grand Place still asleep, neither the noise of the explosion, the falling ruins, nor the removal, having awoke her.

The total loss by this melancholy accident, proved to be one hundred and one killed, and thirteen wounded ; the cause of the explosion will probably for ever remain unknown ; part of the building was used as a manufactory of cartridges, and it is supposed that loose powder must have been collected in the cracks of the floor, and being ignited by a spark from a pipe, have communicated with the magazine. This, however, is mere conjecture, for, in this case, as in most others of

the same description, those to blame are generally the first to suffer. The escape of the greater part of Algiers from destruction was most providential, for if another magazine, which was in the immediate neighbourhood, containing several tons of gunpowder, had taken fire, three-fourths of the city must have been levelled with the ground, and the loss of life would have been enormous.

A traveller leaving, for the first time, the shores of Europe, and expecting to see, on landing at Algiers, an eastern city, would be much disappointed at finding himself in wide handsome streets, built on the model of those in a large provincial French town, with arcades, and shops filled with the latest Parisian fashions. It is only when he looks around upon the passing crowd, and marks the turban and the bernous, that he is reminded, he is sojourning in another quarter of the globe. This, however, only refers to the lower portion of the town, which has in great part been entirely rebuilt since the occupation; the three principal streets are the Rues "de la Marine," which leads from the harbour to the Place de Gouvernement,

and those of Bab-Azoun and Bab-el-Oued, branching from thence at right angles, and connecting the two gates (after which they are named) at the north and south angles of the city; branching off from these, are a multitude of dark, dirty passages, so narrow as scarcely to allow the passing of a couple of laden donkeys, and redolent with all imaginable filthy smells; these are the remaining Moorish streets in the lower part of the town, and are now fast disappearing under the improving hands of speculators, one of the last epidemics that has afflicted Algeria having been a violent rage for building; the disease has, however, latterly taken a new turn, a strong desire to make large fortunes by farming having been added to the former symptoms; this complication of maladies will, it is to be feared, ere long lead to fatal results, particularly to those whose constitutions have been weakened by attacks of a similar nature in their native country.

In the afternoon we visited the upper town and the Kasbah. Starting from the Place we commenced the ascent, passing a large mosque, now converting into a Christian

Church ; the building in itself is handsome, and the requisite alterations and improvements are being executed in the Moorish style, with good taste. Near this, a little higher up, is the residence of the governor-general, with nothing remarkable in its exterior ; but the apartments, which are not permitted to be seen by strangers, are said to be magnificently fitted up.

From thence we ascended to the Kasbah, through a labyrinth of wretched streets, inhabited by the very dregs of the population, built without the slightest attempt at regularity, winding their devious course in almost inextricable confusion, the difficulty of threading them, being increased by the numerous blind alleys, and the striking likeness each house bears to its next door neighbour. Fortunately every street has its French name painted in large letters at the corner, the alleys marked "impasse," and each house numbered. The streets are, in many places, more contracted than in the lower town, and the upper stories of the houses generally projecting some feet over the lower, added to the numerous arches under which the road-

way passes, formed by houses built over and on both sides of the street, render them dark and gloomy; and, in the hot weather, the stench produced by the decaying filth, so plentifully scattered about, must, in such confined situations, produce dreadful diseases, were it not for the healthy situation of the city, placed so favourably to catch every breath of air from the cooling surface of the sea.

Reaching at last the highest angle of the city, we entered the Kasbah (a word which, in Arabic, signifies a fortress, or citadel) from a small irregularly-shaped piece of ground, called by the French, Place des Victoires. Passing under an archway, the recesses in the sides of which were used by the Dey's troops as guard-rooms, we hastened at once to the ramparts. From hence we had a magnificent view; below us was the city, having the appearance of a gigantic flight of steps, based on the sea, and gradually diminishing in width till they reached the point on which we were standing; the harbour crowded with shipping, the graceful latteen sails of the Mediterranean contrast-



ing picturesquely with the clumsy funnels of the steamers ; the sea stretching as far as the eye can reach to the northward and eastward ; the fertile plain of the Meteedjah, extending from the foot of the heights behind Algiers to Cape Matifou, the extreme point of land to the east forming the Bay of Algiers. The large white building, about the centre of the bay, and situated a mile inland, is the Maison Carrée, for many years one of the most important posts in Algeria, but now rendered comparatively unimportant by the complete pacification of the Meteedjah.

The weather, which had been threatening for some time, did not permit us to dwell long on this splendid prospect, and descending from the walls, we proceeded to inspect the interior of the fortress. Within the walls were contained the palace and harem of the Dey, barracks for his household troops, upon whose fidelity his safety from the frequently-insurgent soldiery of the regency depended, the treasury, and principal magazine. The whole is now occupied as a barrack, and we were permitted to visit any part we wished.

We entered a handsome court to the right of the way leading from the outer gate, paved with marble, the second story, surmounted with spacious galleries, open to the inside, and connecting the various apartments on that floor, which were the private residence of the Dey. Although they, of course, have suffered greatly from their transformation into a barrack, they could never have been remarkable, either for beauty of decoration, or for size, in both of which qualities, many houses, the property of private individuals in the city, far surpass them.

These are now occupied as officers' quarters, and projecting from the gallery connecting them is a covered balcony of lattice work overhanging the court below. This small room is one of the principal objects of interest in the Kasbah, for within it was given the famous "coup de chasse-mouche," an event pregnant with consequences of such vital importance to the Dey and the regency. On the 27th of April, 1827, the eve of the feast of the Beyram, the diplomatic corps were, according to custom, presented to pay

their respects to the Dey. During the interview an angry discussion took place between the Dey and the French consul, which ended by the Dey in a passionate moment striking the consul in the face with his fan. To this blow the subsequent events that have taken place are to be referred ; it cost the Dey his throne, drove him an exile to die in a foreign land, caused the ruin of the Turkish dominion, which had endured for upwards of three hundred years, and in replacing it by an European and Christian government, must, sooner or later, work a most beneficial change in the condition of the northern coast of Africa, however dim and distant such a prospect may appear at present.

This room is now used as a poultry yard ; and, singularly enough, as we entered, a cock strutting on the deserted divan proclaimed his victory over some feebler rival by a triumphant crow, an appropriate emblem of the real state of affairs.

The harem, arranged in the same manner as the apartments of the Dey, formed a square, with this only difference, that instead of a court paved with marble, the interior

space was laid out as a garden, of which a few melancholy looking shrubs are now all that remain. Although scarcely larger than a room, and surrounded with lofty walls, it was the only place where the inmates were permitted to breathe the fresh air of heaven, the frequent visits to the baths and to the graves of relatives allowed to other women being forbidden to them.

On the left of the entrance is placed the grand magazine, a substantial building, surmounted by a dome : near it is a fountain, remarkable for the beauty and chasteness of its design, a canopy of marble, supported by twisted columns of the same material, and ornamented with arabesque patterns and verses from the Koran, sculptured in relief. Not far from this was the treasury, which, at the period of the capture of the city by the French, contained an enormous sum : what the total amount really was still remains a mystery. A thousand stories are current, even at the present day, imputing corrupt actions to many of the highest officers in the conquering army. These are but mere rumours and assertions, totally unsupported

by evidence, and probably owe their origin to the fact, that no one knows what became of the large sum stated by the official government accounts to have been shipped to France, to the amount of forty-three millions of francs. There is, however, but little doubt that it was employed by the ministry of Charles X. at the commencement of the revolution of July.

The total estimated value of the contents of the treasury, of the various articles of merchandise in the Dey's warehouses, and of the munitions of war found in the city, was nearly fifty-six millions, leaving a surplus, after paying all the expenses of the expedition, of upwards of seven millions. In France the most exaggerated accounts were believed of the enormous riches of Algiers, and of the peculations of the army, so that to prevent the importation of this imaginary plunder, the search of baggage arriving from Africa was in some instances conducted with such minuteness, that a coffin, containing the corpse of a young officer killed there, was opened, and the body searched for treasure.

The Dey's system of keeping accounts and storing his money was a very simple one. Wooden partitions divided the treasury into bins like a cellar, one for gold, another for silver, and so on, separating foreign and native coin : when money was to be paid in, the amount was thrown uncounted into the appropriate bin, and the disbursements made in the same style by taking out the sum required. Such also was the carelessness shown, that in one part, the walls still bear the impressions of coins, cast in at random, before the inner coating of plaster had had time to dry. A mosque, stables, warehouses, in which the Dey kept the wool and other articles received in kind as tribute, and domestic offices, were also contained within the enceinte of the Kasbah, which formed in itself a little city.

## CHAPTER II.

Residence of the British Consul General—Terrace Roofs—Peeping—Marks of Lord Exmouth's visit—Plans—Arab Market—New Suburb—Battle of Isly—A Parisian Traveler and his Adventures—Mustapha Pacha—Chasseurs d'Afrique—Experimental Gardens—Produce—Cochineal—Moorish Café—Ride in the country.

LINGERING too long in these scenes of the by-gone power of the once-dreaded rulers of Algiers, we were obliged to hasten down to keep our appointment at the hospitable table of Mr. St. John, the British Consul General. Mr. St. John's residence in the city, which he only occupies during the winter and spring, is one of the finest remaining specimens of Moorish domestic architecture in Algiers. The street in which it is situated, as yet untouched by the levelling hand of improvement—narrow, dark, and dirty—

is a fair example of one of the principal streets previous to the Conquest.

The house, like every other, be it large or small, forms a square. The inner court, paved with marble, and a fountain, with flowers and shrubs in the centre, is surrounded with arcades, forming covered galleries two stories high, supported by spiral columns of white marble; a balustrade, beautifully carved in wood, with arabesque patterns, runs round the upper story, which is reached by a narrow staircase in the corner; the rooms are long and narrow, with their doors and windows opening upon the interior, so that the gallery forms the sole mode of communication from one apartment to another. Where the floors are not of marble, gaily painted tiles of coarse porcelain, are used in its place, and the walls are also lined with the same material for three or four feet from the ground.

Mr. St. John has had the good taste to preserve as much as possible of the Moorish style, and only to make such alterations as were necessary for comfort, such as fire-places for burning coal, and replacing the



divans and cushions with English furniture. From the second floor a staircase in marble and porcelain leads up to the terraced roof, a delightful lounge in the cool of the evening, after the exhausting heats of a summer's day. Upon these terraces it was the custom for the women to appear shortly before sunset to enjoy the evening breezes, without veils, and frequently but slightly clad; the men, by a sort of tacit agreement, not joining them till after dusk, on account of each house-top being overlooked by, and also overlooking the neighbouring premises. The infraction of this rule by the French officers on the first occupation of the city, nearly led, in some instances, to very serious results, the feeling of exasperation being much greater at seeing a man peaceably promenading on his own roof armed with a telescope, than that produced by the actual presence of an invading army within their walls.

Thus it is, that even a slight disregard of the habits and prejudices of a nation is more deeply felt than injuries. However, I do not think it is in the power of man to withstand the temptation of getting a distant

peep at the imprisoned beauties of the harem — beauties at least through the charms lent to them by imagination, and by the feelings impressed upon our minds in the days of childhood, by the wonders and romances of the Arabian nights.

The house still bears some marks of Lord Exmouth's visit in 1816, a cannon ball having passed through the side nearest the sea, and then hopping down stairs from step to step, broken each in its turn ; a discharge of grape shot has also written its name in very decided characters on a wall lined with arabesque tiles facing a window.

We spent a most agreeable evening, and the time was not only pleasantly but profitably passed, as our host kindly gave us his advice as to the plan we should follow in our future proceedings. He recommended us in the first place to leave Algiers in a day or two for the southward, visiting Bleedah, crossing the chain of the lesser atlas to Me-deah, where the general commanding the district, to whom he would give us a letter of introduction, would inform us as to the state of the country, and probably facilitate

our seeing the Arab tribes, and other objects worthy of note. The weather also had changed for the better, after a long continuance of rain and snow, and was therefore likely to remain fine, and we should have ample time on our return, before the departure of the coasting steamer, to see the rest of the city and its environs.

Next morning we were up between five and six to attend the Arab market, held daily outside the gate Bab-azoun, for the sale of provisions, forage, and other country produce. Nearly all the articles for sale are brought on ass-back, and the immense loads carried by some of the most diminutive of these beasts of burthen, rendered it a matter of wonder how so much could be stowed on such a small space. The donkeys laden with forage from the Meteedjah, had the appearance of itinerant hay-stacks, rendering it also a matter of doubt when stationary, in which direction the head or tail might lay. Very few horses were to be seen, and those miserable looking brutes, hardly more pre-possessing than their dirty, ragged masters. A patient looking camel or two,

slouching along through the crowd, with a large basket on either side, gave variety to the scene.

As to the Arabs themselves, seen for the first time by a stranger in the land, it would be gross injustice to form any opinion of them by only seeing them here. Most of those who attend this market are from the immediate vicinity of Algiers, and having been for years in habits of constant intercourse with Europeans, may be well supposed to have lost a portion of their nationality, and to have also acquired some of the vices of civilization, without the virtues.

Having satisfied our curiosity at the market, we continued our walk through the new suburb rapidly rising on this side of the city, and consisting of houses built by some of the later colonists, in preference to being cooped up in the hot and narrow streets within the walls, or paying an enormous sum for an eligible site near the port.

After breakfast we went in search of some officers to whom we had letters of introduction, and also to prepare those things requisite for our journey which we had not pro-

cured at Marseilles. During our inquiries after one of the former, we had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of Colonel B., who had commanded one of the regiments at the battle of Isly; at our request he gave us a description of the action, and I can hardly imagine a more magnificent sight than that of the 14th of August, 1844, when the front line of the Moroquine army, composed of twelve thousand cavalry, advanced to the charge, against the small but compact columns of the French infantry. The details of this action being so well known, I shall not repeat them, and it would be difficult to transfer to paper the account which we heard given "viva voce," so graphically, and with so much spirit.

Among the various costumes and styles of dress seen in the streets of Algiers, none are so ridiculous as that of the European civilian, dressed "à l'Arabe," some fine specimens of which we saw to-day. One of this "genus," a wealthy shopkeeper from the Rue Chaussée, D'Antin, had, by his adventures a short time since, created some little amusement—enthusiastic on the subject of the new colony,

his thoughts by day had been for months of Algeria, and his dreams by night of ber-noused warriors, fiery steeds, and bloody yataghans. At last, determined to see with his own eyes, he left his beloved Paris, and arrived safely in Algiers.

His first care was to procure a complete Arab dress, in which he sallied forth the morning after his arrival. He came in search of adventures, and he was soon gratified; stalking along he accidentally hustled a couple of French soldiers, he was sworn at, thrashed, and rolled in the mud, as a "*S-cochon d'Arabe*," lost his purse from having no pockets in his new garments, and was nearly kicked down stairs by the garçon of his hotel, for venturing to enter his own room.

Undismayed by these misadventures, he set out the following day, armed to the teeth, to ride to Bleedah, when, half way there, he was seized as a suspicious character, by two Arab gendarmes, for being armed without having a permit, and pretending not to understand Arabic, was disarmed and dis-mounted, his hands tied behind his back,

and fastened to his captors' stirrup he spent the night on the ground in a wretched hut, with a handful of cuscusoo for supper, and next morning was dragged into Algiers in broad daylight, half dead with fear and fatigue; on being carried before the police he was instantly liberated, and taking advantage of the first packet, returned to France, after having seen more of life in Algeria in a few days, than many who had spent the same number of years in the colony.

Having procured horses, such as they were, for the afternoon, at the reasonable rate of four francs (the whole day being only six), and Goltz having joined us, we rode out at the Bab-azoun Gate, and, passing the fort of the same name, continued by the road near the sea, leaving the beautiful country-houses and luxuriant gardens of Mustapha Pacha to our right. On an extensive piece of ground, lying between the sea and the foot of the hill, we remained some time, watching the drill of some young soldiers of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, two regiments of cavalry raised especially for

service in Africa, and considered the favourite corps of that army, for all who are desirous of opportunities for distinguishing themselves. They are recruited by volunteers from the cavalry of the line, and must have served a certain time with their regiments. They are well mounted, and admirably armed and equipped for the services required of them.

The horses, as far as possible, are those of the country, and the number bred not being at present sufficient, there is some difficulty in procuring them. A late regulation will, however, partly remedy this, each tribe having had a certain portion of their tribute commuted into furnishing a horse every year for the government service; this source will, it is calculated, yield about eight hundred horses per annum; large numbers have also, at different times, been imported from the neighbouring Regency of Tunis, where the horses are not only lower in price, but more attention being paid to the breeding, they are of a superior description. The export of horses of the government standard is also prohibited, and the rule so strictly



adhered to, that even General Officers have some trouble, in obtaining permission to take a favourite charger out of the country.

The arms of a Chasseur d'Afrique consist, of a long carabine of small bore, a sword, and pistols; their saddlery plain, with a very small valise. The uniform on service, is a light blue jacket with yellow facings, red overalls, strapped with leather, and a low forage-cap, diminishing in size to the crown, with a broad horizontal peak. The uniform of the officers differs from that of the men only in having the breast of the jacket barred with black silk cord. The effect of the whole is good, and from the absence of all useless ornament, and the adaptation of the clothing and accoutrements to the desultory warfare in which they are so constantly engaged, their appearance, either singly, or in line, is soldier-like and active.

These two regiments have been eminently useful, distinguishing themselves in almost every action that has been fought in Africa; and so much so, that a record of their services would be a history of the war from the date of their formation.

Three miles from Algiers, we reached the "Café des Platanes," so called from some magnificent plane-trees overshadowing a fountain and a Moorish café. Opposite are the government experimental gardens, established for the purpose of acclimatising such foreign vegetable productions as may suit the climate, and then, by distribution among the colonists, introducing those likely to succeed into the various districts. The superintendent, seeing that we were strangers, conducted us over the gardens, and pointed out the experiments now in progress. The soil is light and sandy, with a mixture of recent shells; water is led by small canals to every part, and both lime and manure are plentiful. Great care and attention is paid to it, and when labour is more abundant, and the security of the farmers in the rich valleys, and on the slopes of the Atlas, increased, it will become an establishment of great value. The sugar-cane, indigo, banana, American, Egyptian, and Indian cotton, including even the coloured variety from Nankin; yams, and sweet potatoes—

which latter have not, however, succeeded well—are all here.

The most interesting experiment at present going on is the cultivation of the cactus, and the rearing of the cochineal insect upon it. It had been tried some few years ago, and had failed, probably from want of care; however, it now bids fair to become one of the most valuable productions of the colony. Last year, some fresh insects and plants of the cactus arrived from South America; in the autumn they had thriven so well that they were enabled, after reserving a sufficient breeding stock, to prepare a sample which was pronounced to nearly equal the best South American. But little labour or capital is required for the cultivation. A succession of the cactus is easily procured, by merely sticking a leaf into the ground. An occasional cleaning at the bottom keeps the plant healthy; a dozen or so of the insects are then enclosed in a little wicker-work case, the interstices not being large enough to allow of the escape of the full-grown insect; this is placed in the fork

formed by the junction of two leaves, or a nick is made, and in a few days the plant will be found covered with the young, so minute as to be hardly visible to the eye. Two crops can be taken each year, one in the commencement of summer, and the other towards the end of autumn. When they are of a sufficient size, the leaves are gathered, and the insects carefully brushed off over a cloth, sprinkled with vinegar and water, dried quickly in the sun, sorted according to size, and are then fit for market. During the winter a small shed is required over the plants, upon which the insects are preserved for breeding stock. The extent of the gardens, including the plots of ground set apart for cotton and cochineal, is about forty-five acres.

Whilst I was engaged taking a hasty sketch of the café, with its fountain and trees, my companions were seated on a mat under the arcade, drinking coffee, made, as it always is, with the grounds in it, and playing draughts with a sedate old Moor, whose blushing nose, despite his venerable beard and the gravity of his demeanour,

betrayed him as one preferring the wines of France to the commands of his prophet.

After riding along the shore for some little distance, we turned to our right, and ascending the rising ground, inclined in a westerly direction, passing near the site of the model farm, which, turning out a failure, has been for some time abandoned ; and then coming upon the old road from Algiers to Bleedah, returned homewards by the pretty village of Ber-el-Kadem. The road, after descending the heights above Mustapha Pacha, passes through a succession of gardens and country houses, among which the summer residence of the Deys, now that of the governor-general, stands as conspicuous for its beauty as are the immense barracks in its vicinity for their ugliness.

## CHAPTER III.

Departure for Bleedah—Beautiful Views—Fort l'Empereur—Expedition of Charles V.—Its Failure—Curious History of some Artillery—Landing of the French Troops in 1830—Battle of Stawelli—Siege of Fort l'Empereur—Deli Ibrahim—Agricultural Improvements—Colonists—Scarcity of Wood—Saint Ferdinand—Donéra—Bouffarick—The Zouaves—Bleedah—A Fortunate Bankrupt—Orange Groves.

FOLLOWING the advice we had received from Mr. St. John, we started this morning, the 12th of March, in the diligence, at half-past seven, for Bleedah ; trusting to be able there to purchase or hire horses for our contemplated excursion into the interior.

Leaving Algiers by the Bab-el-oued gate, a capital road, constructed by the troops, winds up the steep ascent between the ancient walls of the city and the modern fortifications of the northern side, now in progress.

As the heavy laden diligence slowly toiled up the hill, we had ample time to admire the beauty of the prospect, each turn offering ever varying views of the city, the picturesque slopes of the Boudjariah clothed with wood, and gay with the white roofs of the country houses rising in the midst of their gardens, the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean, and the horizon gradually expanding as we mounted higher, discovering the snowy sail of some distant vessel glistening in the rays of the morning sun, and perchance bearing from their native land those who, self-exiled, flying from poverty and misfortune, would receive with joy the sunny welcome of this their future home, and hail with delight this lovely morning, as the emblem of happier, brighter days to come.

Half a mile beyond the Kashah, the road passes under the walls of Fort l'Empereur, a memorable spot on two occasions in the history of Algiers. Where the fort now stands, Charles V. established his camp and batteries in his disastrous attempt made upon the city in 1541. The expedition was undertaken in the month of October, much

too late in the year for naval operations in the Mediterranean, and it was to the elements that the defeat of the Spanish army was owing, and not to the strength of the enemy, who, notwithstanding the high tone assumed by Muley-Hassan, the governor, were almost unprepared to resist the force brought against them. The troops were landed, and the siege was progressing favourably, when, on the evening of the second day, a terrific storm arose, and, continuing all night, raging with the utmost fury, the fleet was dispersed, many vessels driven from their anchorage were cast on shore and totally lost, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the remnant of the fleet, after losing a hundred and fifty-five vessels, and eight thousand men, succeeded in making Cape Matifou.

Nor on shore did the army suffer less, exposed without shelter to the dreadful storm, drenched with rain, numbed with the cold, and their ammunition damaged, they were not able to withstand the attack of the Algerines, who, well protected within their walls from the weather, and animated



with the belief that the tempest was an especial interposition in their behalf, sallied in the morning from the city, headed by Muley-Hassan—a man of the most daring courage, possessed of great abilities, and bred up in the hardy school of the two Barbarossas.

The Spanish army suffered dreadfully, and a retreat being the only means of preserving the troops, now destitute of everything, they moved the following day towards Cape Matifou, which was reached after enduring a terrible march of four days, constantly harassed by the victorious enemy, and undergoing the extremes of hunger and fatigue.

Some of the guns abandoned by Charles V. on this occasion have a rather remarkable history. Originally French, they were captured by the imperial army from Francis I., at the battle of Pavia: forming part of the artillery train of Charles V. in Africa, they were taken by the Algerines. Mounted on the Kasbah they have served to defend Algiers against the various European squadrons that have attacked the city, and were

finally recaptured by the French in 1830, after an interval of three hundred and five years.

After this signal defeat of the Spanish army, Muley-Hassan, perceiving that the position which Charles had taken up on the heights commanding the Kasbah and the city, would, in the event of any future attack, be again occupied by the enemy, ordered a fort to be built on the spot, and called, in commemoration of his victory, Sultan Calassy, or the Fort of the Emperor.

Strengthened by the successive Deys, more, however, for the purpose of overawing their own subjects, always ripe for revolt, than to guard against foreign invasion, it grew by degrees into a place of considerable strength, and in 1830 consisted of a central tower surmounted by an enceinte nearly square, with a bastion at each angle; the fort was well supplied with artillery and ammunition; its garrison was composed of two thousand three hundred picked men, under the command of the Khasnadji (the minister of finance), and excited by the exhortations of the Mufti, they swore to defend it to the last against

the enemies of their country and of their religion.

The French army having effected a landing on the 14th of June, unopposed, except by some skirmishers at the promontory of Sidi Ferruch, twelve miles to the westward of Algiers, where they had formed a strong entrenched camp; had fought and gained, after a severe contest, the battle of Stawelli, with the loss of upwards of 500 killed and wounded. On the 29th, the heights of the Boudjarah were taken possession of, and Fort l'Empereur regularly invested. The siege was admirably carried on by General La Hitte. On the 4th of July, the fire of the French batteries opened with such effect that in the course of a few hours, despite the courage and daring efforts of the garrison, the guns on the walls were dismounted, the interior had become a heap of ruins, from the fire of the mortars, and a breach, almost practicable, had been made in the northern face of the west bastion.

Under these circumstances, the remnant of the garrison, fearfully reduced in numbers, resolved upon abandoning the fort, and

retreating into the city, leaving only a few men, who preferring rather to perish on the spot they had sworn to defend, than to fly before their Christian enemy, had determined to fire the magazine. Accordingly, about noon, the French batteries still continuing their fire, and the troops waiting, impatiently, the moment when the breach might be reported practicable, a terrific explosion took place—the fort had been blown up, and when the cloud of smoke and dust had cleared off, the western face of the work was nought but a heap of shapeless ruins, an immense breach.

Negotiations were immediately commenced, which soon ended in the almost unconditional surrender of the Dey and the city. Thus is Fort l'Empereur the monument of victory in the days of prosperity, and the scene of the closing struggle—inscribed in the brightest and in the darkest pages of the history of Algiers.

The road, after passing the fort, still continues, for some miles, on the ridge of rising ground between the plains of the Meteedjah to the eastward, and the sea to the west.

Farm-houses are numerous, and the first village on the route, Deli-Ibrahim, is a rising place, with good houses, shops, and a church; and interesting, from being the earliest settlement in the country, having been established, shortly after the occupation, by a band of German colonists, who are now reaping the reward of their perseverance and industry, having undergone all those misfortunes that usually attend a newly-established colony. Not only have they suffered in life and property, from the frequent attacks of the Arabs, but from the greater evil of famine—a vast number having died one year from actual starvation, after a failure of their crops.

The soil in the neighbourhood is excellent, producing the grain, fruits, and vegetables of Europe of a quality equal, and often superior. The extent of land at present under tillage is not great, owing partly to the scarcity of labour, and partly to the unsettled state of the country until within the last two or three years, during which period the agricultural colonists have made more progress than in the preceding ten. Com-

fortable farm-houses, with stables and offices, have been erected, gardens and fields enclosed, and roads made, connecting the farms with the highway ; European ploughs, and implements are seen in the fields, with carts and waggons, made after the national pattern of the French, German, or Spanish proprietor. Herds of cattle, and numerous flocks of sheep grazing on the hill-sides, are pleasing evidences of present prosperity.

Were it not for an occasional party of Arabs going to market with the country produce, or returning from the city, it would be difficult to imagine, from the surrounding scene, that you are travelling in another quarter of the globe ; the languages of Europe are heard on every side, at each turn familiar faces meet the eye, the peasant of the Midi, the discharged soldier, the clumsy Alsacian, and the unmistakable air of the Parisian *badaud*, the Spaniard, at home so idle and lazy, here an industrious colonist, who, in leaving his native land, has seemingly shaken off the hereditary sloth which forms so prominent a feature in the Spanish character, the Maltese, travelling

from village to village, with his little stock of merchandise, the Pole, and the Italian, are each known at once ; and who is there that would not recognise at a glance the group at the door of yonder farm? the mother, stout, homely, and neatly dressed, knitting in the doorway, every now and then restoring order with a sharp word, accompanied by a smile, that almost cancels it, among a happy noisy crowd of little ones, whose flaxen hair, light blue eyes, and round fair cheeks, so delicately white, would teach you to despise the power of an African sun, were it not for a second look at the bronzed features of the mother, across whose brow a narrow stripe, generally covered by her cap, nearly as white as that of the infants at her feet, shows what she was, now is, and they will be ; the well-kept garden, the neat enclosures, all stamp them as of a kindred nation to our own, and the sturdy figure ploughing in the adjoining field, with the curling smoke from his beloved pipe issuing from his mouth, in puffs as regular as if he were labouring on the banks of his own Rhine, prove that the German, where'er he be,

forgets neither the habits nor the industry of his early home.

Owing to the wants of the numerous camps and military posts, that at various times have been formed in the neighbourhood, there is scarcely any wood to be found, and in some places not even brushwood ; this promising to become a serious inconvenience, measures are being taken to remedy it, by obliging each settler to plant, in the course of the first three years, a certain number of trees, proportionate to the extent of his allotment, and avenues have been planted, at the expense of government, at the sides of the public roads. The trees are at present too young to make much show, but, in the course of a few years, the general appearance of the country in the vicinity of Algiers will be greatly improved ; the soil and the climate are both favourable to the growth of large timber, which is proved, by the few trees that here and there have been allowed to remain, and the healthy appearance of the young plants.

Half way between Deli-Ibrahim and Douera, and three miles to the right of the



road, is seen the village of Saint Ferdinand—the result of an experiment tried in 1843 by Colonel Marengo. The military convicts were placed at his disposal, and he employed them during the winter in clearing the ground and preparing it for cultivation. A village was also built, so that in the spring all was ready to receive the colonists, substantial houses erected for each family, and the laborious and expensive work of bringing an uncultivated tract of land into a fit state spared to them. A small sum was to be paid by each on entering into possession, and the balance by annual instalments. The period is, at present, too early to state with certainty the result of the plan, but the new village is flourishing, and the inhabitants having escaped the principal hardships and struggles attendant on the first year, ought to have a much better chance of success than existed amongst those who toiled unaided along the rugged road, that leads the colonist to comfort and independance.

Passing on the left the village of Baba-Hassan, also founded in 1843, we arrived in Douëra, a large straggling place, surrounded

by a loop-holed wall. Here we stopped to breakfast, and benefitted by the nationality of the landlady, who was so pleased with our German fellow traveller, that she gave us the best the house afforded, and waited upon us herself. The road shortly after leaving Douëra descends into the plain, and is carried in almost a straight line through a level country to Bleedah.

It was now near noon, the sun was bright, and being closely packed in the diligence, we were not sorry when on arriving at Bouffarick, a large military station four leagues from Bleedah, we deposited several of our passengers, amongst whom was a soldier belonging to the Zouaves, two companies of which regiment were quartered here. The Zouaves were intended by Marshal Clausel, who raised the corps in 1830, to act the same part in Africa that our Sepoys play in Asia, and were accordingly at first composed entirely of natives, taking their name from a warlike tribe in the vicinity of Constantine. In a short time, however, the enlistment of Frenchmen into the force was encouraged, and at the present time there are but few

natives, and their numbers are reducing every year.

The uniform is most picturesque,—very large wide trousers of red cloth fastened at the knee, strong leather leggings, laced at the side from the knee to the ankle, shoes, and white gaiters; the jacket is of blue cloth, edged with red, and an arabesque pattern of the same colour on either breast; the waistcoat is of the same material, and having no opening in the front, is either slipped on over the head or buttoned at the side; both jacket and waistcoat are cut low, without collars, leaving the neck bare; a blue sash is wound several times round the waist, and the head-dress is a crimson cap, with blue tassel, and a long handkerchief twisted round converts it into a turban.

Their arms are a musket, bayonet, and short heavy sword. The cartouche-box is carried round the waist, and the bayonet is attached to the right side, the sword of course being on the left, a very light knapsack, and a short blue grey cloak, with a hood, complete a most comfortable, soldier-like, and picturesque uniform.

The Zouaves being employed on every expedition, and from the nature of the war in this country, the light troops having more frequent opportunities given to distinguish themselves than their brethren of the line, the three battalions are the same favourite service for the infantry that the Chasseurs d'Afrique are for the cavalry, and it has often occurred that non-commissioned officers volunteer from the line to serve in the Zouaves as privates.

As we drew nearer to the range of the lesser Atlas, what was apparently lost in grandeur was gained in beauty, as the numerous valleys and water courses that seam the sides of the mountains became more distinctly visible; each dark spot, that at a distance seemed but a shadow, now appeared as woodland, bright with all the colours of the early spring; the white dome of a Maraboût, perched on a rock half way to the summit, overlooked the plain from the midst of an ancient clump of trees, the patches of snow still lay on the heights, and at the entrance of a valley on the verge

of the plain, half hidden by its gardens and orange groves, stood the town of Bleedah.

At half-past two we entered Bleedah, the last two or three miles as we approached the town shewing a great improvement, both in the soil and in its cultivation, when compared to the parts of the Meteedjah, near Bouffarick ; attempts, also, had been made in one or two places to cut open drains, but there was not a sufficient number of them to do much good.

Our first care on our arrival was to secure horses, and, thanks to the officer in charge of the Arab department, we were promised that horses for ourselves, a mule for the baggage, and an Arab guide should be in readiness at the hotel at five o'clock the next morning. Having thus satisfactorily arranged our affairs, we walked through the town, where, however, there is nothing worthy of note. The walls have in some places been rebuilt, and in others repaired, by the French, a " Place d'Armes " has been laid out, and a broad handsome street is building, leading from it to the Algiers gate of the town.

The native portion of the town, built of clay, is in a sadly ruinous condition; in 1825 an earthquake destroyed the greater part of it, Bleedah then numbered fifteen thousand inhabitants, many of whom perished in the ruins. Partially recovered from this disaster, there were but five thousand at the period of the French invasion, and now, from having been the seat for years of constant warfare, the natives hardly number as many hundreds as, twenty years ago, they did thousands.

The European population is greatly on the increase, and, leaving the troops out of the calculation, will shortly outnumber the natives. This is owing to the great natural advantages of the situation of the town, abundance of excellent water, a fertile soil, and a healthy climate, in addition to its being well placed for the purpose of commerce with the interior, and forming a link between the sea-port of Algiers, and country beyond the Atlas.

Speculation in land has been carried on in this neighbourhood to a great extent, in proof of which the following circumstance



was related to me by a person who vouched for its truth. Some years ago a colonist, who had brought over from France but a small capital, became one of the earliest settlers in Bleedah, and invested his money in the purchase of a piece of land in the neighbourhood. The disasters of 1839, when Abd-el-Kader overran the Meteedjah, destroyed the value of his property, and then turning his energies in another direction, he borrowed money, speculated largely, failed for a very considerable sum, and ended by absconding from his creditors and taking refuge in Spain, leaving behind him only this petty farm, of no value.

Owing to some legal difficulties, the land remained for a long period unsold, speculation had again commenced, and when, a short time ago, it was brought into the market, the sale produced so much, that, after paying the creditors principal and interest, and defraying all legal expenses, a considerable surplus remains for the runaway, when he chooses to return and claim it.

Taking with us our guns—not, however, for protection, as there is nothing to fear in

the environs, but thinking we might fall in with a covey of partridges in the course of our ramble among the hills—we left the town by the gate nearest to the Atlas, taking the course of the Oued-el-Kebir up the valley by which it descends into the plain, turning several mills in its progress. To the ample supply of water afforded by this little stream, does Bleedah owe its luxuriant gardens and groves of orange-trees, said to produce the finest oranges in the world. Those we tasted here, although not gathered at the proper season, were delicious.

Formerly, the plantations of fruit-trees, principally oranges, lemons, and olives, were the chief source of wealth to the inhabitants, but the number of acres cleared by the axes and saws of the French pioneers, round the walls of the town, brought poverty upon many. This destruction of fruit-trees—wanton and barbarous though it may seem to be—was, in this case, absolutely necessary; the orchards at the very foot of the walls, gave shelter to the Arabs, who, hidden from the sight of the French sen-



tries, fired with impunity at every man that showed himself.

After a pleasant ramble of three hours, we returned to our hotel, where a dinner, as well cooked, and as good as we could have got in France—out of Paris—finished the labours of the day ; and full of pleasurable anticipations of what the morrow and its successors were to bring forth, retired to bed at a reasonable hour.

## CHAPTER IV.

Leave Bleedah—Our party, horses, and accoutrements—  
A canteen—Cross the Cheffa—Military road and encampment—Engineering difficulties—Magnificent scenery of the Pass—The ascent—Strata—Extensive view—Arrive at Medeah—Description of Medeah—Aqueduct—Hotels—General Marey—Pet lion—Morning walk—Soldier's gardens—Arab horses—Menagerie.

NEXT morning, at five o'clock, the "garçon," more punctual than the generality of his kind, awoke us with the news that the horses and guide were waiting.

It was nearly seven o'clock before we were ready to set forth, and the first view of our gallant steeds was anything but satisfactory. They were not bigger than ponies; starved, miserable-looking animals, who appeared hardly able to put one foot before the

other, it seemed quite cruel to mount them. The saddles and bridles, old, torn, and mended, with packthread, did not set off the animals to advantage; but we had one circumstance to be proud of—the most fastidious eye that ever criticised a turn-out in the park could not have denied that our horses and our saddlery were in perfect keeping.

The most respectable of the party was our guide—a strapping, good-tempered Arab, weighing some twelve or thirteen stone—who, after having arranged our baggage on the back of the mule in a couple of panniers, placed himself on the top of all, with a telescope slung over one shoulder, and the mountain-barometer over the other. As we were not to arrive at Medeah until the afternoon, we carried provisions with us to breakfast on the road. The bread being baked in the form of a circle, was, for the convenience of carriage, strung on a rope, and fastened on the pack-saddle of the mule. This arrangement suited our horses admirably, two of them rushed upon the mule, and before we saw

what they were about, a couple of loaves had disappeared.

Besides our three selves, our party was increased by two Prussian officers, who only intended going as far as Medeah, and returning the next day, and a French officer travelling on duty. The commissariat stores having been replenished after the loss they had suffered, and our guide becoming impatient, we started at half-past seven, with a crowd of dirty boys at our heels, who had collected to witness our departure.

For five miles the road skirts the northern bank of the Oued-el-Kebir, which runs parallel with the mountains until it falls into the Cheeffa, near the point where it escapes from the confined valley to which it gives its name. Crossing the former stream a little above the junction, we came to a small wooden shed on the bank of the Cheeffa, to which the owner was putting the finishing touches; a tri-coloured flag waved from the gable, and a sign chalked on a fragment of a barrel, informed the traveller that the newly established canteen was dedicated to "*L'armée d'Afrique.*"

We were fortunate enough to find that the river was fordable without danger, a point on which our guide had expressed some doubt, and which, if determined in the negative, would have obliged us to cross in a boat kept for the purpose; swimming our horses, and then bearing away to the westward, we must have crossed the mountains by the Col de Mouzaïa, the only other pass in this portion of the Atlas, and three hours longer than the route by the valley of the Cheeffa. Like all rivers that rise in the midst of mountains, the stream increases with extraordinary rapidity after rain or snow, and before the boat was placed at this point by order of the government, many lives had been lost through ignorance and unwarrantable temerity.

Crossing the river, and keeping due south, we ascended the western bank for two or three miles by an excellent road, entirely the work of the troops, from the surveys and plans of the officers of engineers. The valley began to narrow by degrees as we advanced, the brushwood grew thicker, and there was just sufficient space for the river and the road. Turning the shoulder of the

hill, we arrived at the encampment of one of the battalions working at the road; placed in an amphitheatre formed by a sudden bend of the river, the tents were intermingled with neatly constructed huts, made of green boughs, so interwoven that the leaves and small twigs formed a thatch on the exterior, not only pleasing to the eye, but impervious to the weather. The officers' tents were placed on the higher part of the camp, and the canteen by the side of the road was distinguished from its less aspiring neighbours by its wooden roof and a calico tri-colour.

The men employed on this duty receive seventy-five centimes additional pay per diem, and during the winter and spring, as the work is not hard, it is rather preferred by the troops to garrison duty. During the summer and autumn months the works are suspended on account of the unhealthiness of the climate, and also because the military operations, which generally commence in May, furnish ample employment for the troops.

Passing the camp, where the completed road ends, we entered the narrowest part of

the valley, and for two hours traversed a deep glen of the most romantic beauty. Two years ago it was scarcely possible for a single pedestrian to pass, and it was only with almost incredible labour that the engineer officer succeeded in doing so; wading in the river the greater part of the distance, and toiling along the perpendicular faces of the rocks, which, in many places, were so overgrown with thickly matted underwood as to be impenetrable without the use of the axe,—he arrived at the upper end, without shoes, and with scarce a rag of clothing left on his back.

With the aid of gunpowder, a rough track has been made close to the river, at present just wide enough to form a horse road, but which, when completed, will be a monument of engineering skill that will bear comparison with the Alpine roads of Europe. If the country continues quiet, it will be finished in about two years. On either hand rise the perpendicular sides of the mountains worn by the action of the water into a thousand fantastic shapes,—huge masses of rock fringed with the luxuriant vege-

tation that springs from every fissure. Each spot, each little ravine that retains sufficient earth, is green with the wild laurel, the juniper, the dwarf oak, and the olive, with here and there some tree of a larger growth that has withstood the storm, firmly planted in its more sheltered nook. The oleander flourishes on each little gravelly bed by the side of the river, and a variety of shrubs and flowering plants, with a profusion of lavender in full bloom, grow on every vacant spot.

At our feet, the river, slightly swollen and discoloured by the melting snow, rushed as it were, painfully through its contracted bed, foaming around the misshapen masses that detached from the rocks above, impede, but cannot check its course. Nor do the highest summits of the Atlas omit to send their tribute to add to the beauty of the scenery. Countless streams pour down their sides, and reaching the edge of the valley, fall in cascades from rock to rock till they join the river. At one point of view, where the rocks are steepest and the vegetation most beautiful, five are visible at once. The finest, falls from a precipice of 300 feet,



leaping from ledge to ledge, here and there for a moment concealed among the under-wood, appearing and re-appearing broken into a hundred streamlets that trickle over the mossy surface of the rocks, like threads of silver, until again united by some broader ledge, they together seek the stream beneath.

At noon a halt of an hour was made, to feed our horses and ourselves ; the morning, which had been dull and threatening rain, had given place to a fine afternoon, bright though cold ; another half hour's ride carried us out of the valley of the Cheeffa, we having forded the river thirteen times since crossing it in the morning.

The real ascent of the lesser Atlas now commenced ; the road, which had hitherto followed the course of the running water, now became a winding path cut in the face of the mountain through brushwood and dwarfed trees rarely exceeding ten feet in height. At the southern entrance of the valley we passed a solitary farmhouse, and near it, several limestone quarries that had been opened by the French ; the lime seemed of an excellent quality. The

strata on the banks of the river had consisted almost entirely of clay slate, and as we ascended, was replaced by a coarse-grained sandstone containing a quantity of fossil shells.

After surmounting the first ascent, we crossed an extensive plateau covered with cattle and goats, grazing under the charge of a couple of Arab boys; several uninclosed patches of cultivated ground were also seen at intervals. Another hill, rising before us, still remained to be climbed; and although not very steep, the road was bad. When once on the summit, we were well repaid by the magnificent prospect.

Taking a retrospective glance over our two days' journey, east and west nothing was to be seen, save mountain beyond mountain, as far as the eye could reach; to the southward, looking through the gap formed by the Cheeffa, was the broad plain of the Meteedjah, bounded by the hills to the westward of Algiers: and beyond all, the dimly defined horizon of the Mediterranean.

From hence a short descent brought us

into Medeah, where we arrived at half-past three o'clock, our horses not very tired, having carried us the nine leagues much better than could have been supposed from their wretched appearance at starting.

Immediately on our arrival, having fulfilled the travellers first duty of seeing our horses looked after, and leaving them to enjoy their unaccustomed treat of a full allowance of barley, we sallied forth to deliver Mr. St. John's letter to General Marey, and not finding him at home, wandered about the town until dusk.

Medeah, the capital of the province of Tittery, and the residence of a Bey under the Turkish rule, is now the head quarters of a subdivision of the French army, under the command of a major-general, whose authority extends to the borders of the Great Sahara Desert. It was founded by the Romans, and the situation is well chosen. The town, placed on the extremity of a sandstone ridge shelving abruptly on three sides, is easily defended; in the midst of the Atlas, 3200 feet above the level of the sea, the climate is healthy, and the soil fertile.

From its position at the southern entrance of the important pass of the Col de Mouzaïa, and the influence which the possession of the town would give over the powerful tribes inhabiting the surrounding country, it was one of the first places coveted by the French. Taken in November, 1830, it was abandoned at the end of six weeks ; in June, the following year, it was again seized and occupied for a few days, and it was not until May, 1840, that it was finally taken possession of, after some sharp fighting, by a force under the command of the Duc d'Orleans.

As at Algiers and Bleedah, the destruction of the Arab streets is going on, and French buildings are rising in their place ; the only structure of consequence yet finished is the military hospital in the upper part of the town, erected in a fine airy situation, and a conspicuous object for miles around. The streets are narrow, dirty, and encumbered with the ruins of houses, pulled down on account of the contemplated improvements : stone is the building material used in place of mud, and owing to the prevalence of heavy



rains, the flat terrace is superseded by sloping roofs covered with tiles. Higher up the town the remains of the Roman walls are plainly visible, and in clearing the ground for new buildings Roman foundations are constantly uncovered ; a few coins and portions of inscriptions of no value are all the relics that have been found.

Making the circuit of the ancient walls we descended into the valley to examine the most striking feature of the town, an aqueduct of two tiers of arches, which we had passed on the right hand in entering. Spanning the low ground, and connecting a neighbouring hill with the central portion of the place, it still supplies a copious stream of water. It was the work of a Bey of Tlemçen more than two centuries and a half ago, and although of great magnitude, it is more picturesque than useful, as several springs of water of a superior quality rise in the lower part of the town, and an enemy powerful enough to seize them would be equally able to cut through the channel of the aqueduct. A tradition exists that it was built by Christian prisoners, in which case it is not

improbable that the workmen may have been some of the captives taken at the period of the ill-fated expedition of Charles the Fifth.

Returning to the inn, which we found tolerably comfortable, and certainly improved since last year, if we may judge by the account of a French traveller, who writing of Medeah, says—"On a déjà plusieurs cafés avec l'inévitable billard, et deux hôtels où le travail est divisé, car l'un loge et l'autre nourrit; les chambres n'y sont pas encore tout à fait meublées, car le charpentier n'a pas encore achevé l'escalier qui y monte. On y a oublié une certaine faïence tres-utile, mais il y a déjà des miroirs."

After dinner, Captain Martenot, General Marey's aid-de-camp, called upon us with an invitation from the general to visit him in the evening, when he would make such arrangements as might be necessary, in furtherance of our wishes to see the country. We were most kindly received by the general, who, on learning the time we had to spare, sketched out a route for us, far exceeding in interest any practicable one that we had ventured to trace out for ourselves. We were to

commence with a boar-hunt, leaving Medeah the next day, so as to arrive on the ground in the afternoon, and hunt on the succeeding morning ; from thence we were to proceed to Boghar, the most advanced French post overlooking the Little Sahara ; make an excursion into it, if our time served, and return by a different route to Medeah, visiting the various tribes both going and returning.

During the evening we learnt much that was interesting concerning the Arabs from the General, who is more intimately acquainted with the Arab character, and with their manners and customs, than perhaps any other officer in the French service. For several years commandant of the Spahis (the Arab cavalry in the pay of the French), he lived among them, adopting their dress, and both writing and speaking Arabic fluently ; he is thus able to communicate with the tribes under his government without the medium of an interpreter.

On our asking some questions about a lion that we had heard belonged to him, he said he would introduce us at once, and, turning to his servant, desired him to bring

up Sultan. In a few minutes the door opened and the lion entered the room, the man only leading him by a tuft of his mane. He was a magnificent animal, two years old, and full grown, all but his mane, which although only a foot long, made, nevertheless, a respectable appearance; he did not seem to care about our being strangers, but walking about the room like a large dog, permitted us to take liberties with him, such as patting him, shaking a paw, and making him exhibit his teeth and claws. He showed, however, a marked predilection in favour of his old acquaintances, and laying down before them, turned on his back to be scratched.

After a scratch or two, he began to yawn, and was fairly settling himself for a nap, when a cigar was puffed in his face—a proceeding he evidently did not approve of—Rising in a hurry, curling up his lips, and wrinkling his nose, he exposed to view a splendid set of teeth—a sure sign that he was not pleased. A hearty sneeze seemed to restore him to good temper; and bearing no malice, he returned a friendly pat, bestowed upon him by Captain Martenot, who



had been the aggressor, by rubbing his head caressingly against his knees.

Next morning, meeting Captain Martenot in the Place d'Armes, by appointment, we visited the portions of the town not viewed the previous day. Outside the southern gate a daily market is held, during the early hours of the morning, by the Arabs; it differed but little from that formerly described at Algiers, except that the donkeys were much smaller, they not exceeding in size a full-grown Newfoundland dog, whilst the men, of a superior race, were many of them strikingly handsome, with a thoroughbred air, very unlike the mongrel aspect of the Arabs of the Meteedjah.

Further on, a few minutes' walk from the gate, in a little valley abundantly watered, are the gardens of the garrison. Each regiment or each battalion has its appointed piece of ground, which again divided into as many lots as there are companies, supplies the whole with vegetables. The men either work in the garden in turn, or those who understand and prefer it are relieved by their comrades of a certain portion of the

ordinary duties in exchange for their labour. Here, as at other places I have since visited, the ground in the occupation of the troops was in a high state of culture, and superior both in produce and neatness of arrangement, to the gardens of the civilians; and when the two lay side by side, enjoying the same advantages as to soil and climate, no one could mistake which was the soldiers' and which the settlers'.

In many of our own colonies, and even at home, this system might be followed with beneficial results to our troops; for, putting aside the addition the produce would make to the comforts of the men, any employment or amusement that would tend to keep the soldier out of the canteen or public-house during his leisure hours, and there are many on whom it would have that effect, must be advantageous.

Returning from the gardens, we entered a small mosque near the Place d'Armes, which has been converted into a church; the gay decorations of the Roman Catholic altar, the gift of the Queen when the Duc d'Aumale was commanding at Medeah, contrast some-

what strangely with the simplicity of the walls, ornamented alone with verses from the Koran. Calling, in our way to the new Hospital, upon an officer of the garrison who devotes his spare time to the study of natural history, we were permitted to examine his collection, which included many rare specimens, and was especially rich in the aquatic birds that resort to the numerous lakes and marshes of Algeria; a large eagle, killed the preceding day, attracted our attention by his beauty, and two rams' heads, one with four and the other with six horns, although common, had a singular appearance to eyes only accustomed to see sheep with two.

Walking through the hospital, which was extremely clean, with lofty well-ventilated rooms, nearly unoccupied, a convincing proof of good management, and the healthiness of the station, we returned to the inn, quite ready for our breakfast, which had been waiting for some time. The hour of our departure was fixed for one o'clock, and our three kits not taking much time to pack up, being now reduced to a change of clothes

each, we passed the interval in the General's stable-yard examining his horses, which he kindly permitted us to do. From his former appointment in command of the Spahis, and his constant intercourse with tribes dwelling near the desert, where the finest horses are bred, he has not neglected the opportunities afforded him.

The General's favourite charger was purchased at a high price, and after a lengthened negotiation, from a wealthy chief in the south-west. A description of him will serve to give an idea of a first-rate Barbary Arab. Standing barely fifteen hands and a half, jet black, a coat like satin, and a mane and tail that would win the heart of any lady; small head well set on, large full eyes, wide nostrils, and small tapering ears in constant motion; a handsome forehead and plenty of bone (lightness below the knee being a common fault); broad and deep-chested, full in the girth, and well ribbed up; hind-quarters rather falling away, strong but not handsome; this, as well as carrying the tail meanly, is almost universal. Through kind treatment he had become as gentle as a

lamb; yet in every motion there was that wild freedom which, seized upon by Horace Vernet, gives such life and energy to his truthful pictures of Arab warfare.

Sultan, who occupies an empty stable in the same square, was present part of the time, and such is the force of habit, the horse did not seem to be in the least afraid of him, and he, in return, took no more notice of us or the horse than walking to the door, which was open, and looking around without attempting to come out. Quiet as he is at present, he may become dangerous, and General Marey, afraid of this, is anxious to part with him, not liking himself to place his pet in a cage.

Besides the horses and the lion, there were French sporting dogs, Arab curs, and a breed between the two. In a niche under the verandah was perched an eagle, looking most unhappy, and in an adjoining court were a couple of lovely gazelles, the male rather shy, but the female, more confiding, fed from our hands.

## CHAPTER V.

Set out with Captain Martenot for the Little Desert—Formidable party—Steep ascent—Received by Bel Arbi—Beautiful situation of the tent—Shooting party—An Arab tent and furniture—Preparations for supper—Our bivouac—The Kaïd's answer—Couscousoo—Supper—Arrangements for passing the night—Day-break—Boar-hunt—Providential escape—Proceed to the dashera of the Haoueras—Arab huts—Breakfast "Beghir"—Fertile valley—Mid-day halt—Spahis—Arab douar—Arrive at Boghar.

COLLECTING outside the town at the appointed time, we commenced our march, accompanied for some distance by the General. On arriving at the verge of the plateau, overlooking a deep valley we had to cross, he took his leave, giving us into the charge of Captain Martenot, who had most kindly undertaken to show us life among the Bedouens.

The day was beautiful; a cool breeze tempered the rays of a brilliant sun, and descending into the valley, we soon overtook the party on foot, who had started an hour before us. We were now a formidable-looking body; half a dozen officers of the garrison equipped for the chase, twenty light infantry to act next day as beaters, an escort of Spahis who were to continue with us till our return, a colonist from near Medeah, one of the best sportsmen in the province, several servants, Captain Martenot, and our three selves, altogether upwards of forty; an indefinite number of dogs of all races and dimensions, from the powerful animal that would attack a boar single-handed, to the noisy little terrier that ran yelping after every rabbit that crossed the path, were attached to the party.

Keeping first on one, and then on the other bank of a small stream that lay half hid in the midst of the luxuriant underwood at the bottom of the valley, we continued in a westerly direction for nearly an hour; the party on foot extending on either hand, beat the covers as we advanced, and an occa-

sional shot when a partridge rose, or a rabbit darted from bush to bush, enlivened the scene.

Lying on a heap of stones, I observed the first snake I had seen in Northern Africa; its colour was a greenish yellow; it was two feet and a half long, and of a harmless kind.

Leaving the valley by turning abruptly to the southward, we commenced a tedious ascent, toiling up the steep face of the mountain by a winding track, doing duty in the Atlas for a road. These paths are made by the Arabs with but little trouble; the heavy rains falling in the winter and spring, form, in the course of their descent, by washing away the earth and small stones, a multitude of rocky channels, these channels, followed by the Arabs as far as they extend in the proper direction, are then abandoned for the next that may suit, and thus following the fall of the water, there is a road—such as it is—up the sides of the steepest mountains. In dry weather, they are a mass of stones and angular rocks, and after rain, there is the addition of a stream



of water. Pushing on ahead, I gained a rocky point half-way up the ascent, and dismounting, awaited the arrival of my companions by the side of a cool clear spring, rising under the shade of an ancient ilex. Resuming our march, the summit was soon reached, where, in a sheltered nook on the edge of the precipice, an Arab tent was prepared for us, and a hut of brushwood for the men. Bel-Arbi, the Kaïd of the Righa tribe, whose guests we were, a venerable old man, with a flowing beard as white as snow, received us with cordiality, paying the usual string of compliments, bending forward at each, with the hand placed on the breast. These being finished, he lead the way into the tent, and produced a most refreshing supply of milk in an iron pot, which, two or three times refilled, passed rapidly from mouth to mouth.

Thanks to the old Kaïd's native good taste, our encampment was placed on a beautiful spot, evidently not the result of accident or convenience, as he pointed out the extensive prospect with an air of pride; and directed our attention to several huts

in the low ground—hardly distinguishable from the earth and brushwood around them—as the winter residence of his tribe.

We were on a small semicircular platform, under the crest of the mountain, with a sheltering wall of wood and rocks, overgrown with creepers, and forming a natural amphitheatre, opening towards the precipice, which, descending several hundred feet into the valley, afforded a magnificent view of the wild regions we had traversed. On the summit of the opposite ridge, to the north-east, lay Medeah, apparently close at hand, although three hours had barely served to accomplish the distance. In every other direction rose mountain beyond mountain, like the gigantic waves of some troubled sea, until wearied with the interminable extent, the eye sought relief in the valley below, where the stream, seen at intervals through the thick copse, was glancing brightly in the declining sun.

Two hours of daylight still remaining, and the Arabs reporting plenty of partridges on the hill-sides, we went out shooting. There were birds in abundance, and considering

the difficulty of flushing the red-legged partridge in such dense cover, a tolerable bag was made up, including three hares, some rabbits, and a snipe. Soon after dusk, the party reassembled, the produce of the evening's sport was counted over, and several hungry-toned voices commenced a series of inquiries after the state of the commissariat. Supper being not quite ready, I will take advantage of the interval to describe an Arab tent, taking the one we were to pass the night under as an example.

Several breadths of coarse brown cloth of the desired length are sewn together into an oblong piece, eyelet-holes are made, or loops are attached, for the tent-ropes at the edges; one, two, or three poles, according to the size of the tent, support the covering, which is stretched out, by being pegged down at the two ends and one side, to wooden pins driven into the ground, leaving generally an open space of a foot or more, all round, for the free admission of a current of air. The front is left quite open, although, sometimes, a curtain is hung up;

and if the tent is pitched in an exposed situation, the front is placed to leeward.

With poor people, a mat, or, perhaps, in winter, a few dressed sheep or goat-skins, form the sole furniture ; with the wealthier, the ground is covered with thick carpets, often of chaste patterns and brilliant colours. On these you sit, on these your meals are placed, and on these you sleep—that is, with regard to the latter, as well as the millions of industrious little inhabitants they always contain, will allow.

The night growing cold, a roaring fire of dry brushwood, crowned with the entire trunk of a tree, blazed and crackled cheerfully in front of the tent ; round one side of the fire, and grouping about two smaller ones were the *voltigeurs* busily superintending the cookery of a couple of sheep that had been dragged by their horns, baaing and struggling into the camp on our arrival : behind was the low dark outline of the hut, the entrance marked by the bright barrels of the piled arms glittering in the firelight. Before us two men were carefully turning a ramrod bearing three brace of plump par-

tridges, looking so brown and juicy, while the gravy hissed and spattered as it distilled, drop by drop, into the ashes below.

On the right of the large fire were squatted a double row of Arabs, silent and scarcely moving, except to pass the pipe from mouth to mouth, or when some old man stretched out his withered arms till his hands nearly touched the flame ; the second row of younger men and boys were not so stationary, rising to assist when water, wood, or other things were wanting, and looking after the horses which stood picketed around.

Inside the tent the scene was not less picturesque. Thrown into every imaginable attitude lay our merry noisy party, mingled with dogs, guns, blankets, and saddlery, while the old Kaïd and his eldest son, a handsome lad of sixteen, sitting gravely in the midst, doubtless wondered in their own minds what was going on. Commenting upon Bel Arbi's patriarchal appearance, he was asked his age? Looking sorrowfully down, he paused for an instant, and answered, quietly passing his hand down his white and flowing beard, " I

am not so very old ; a few years ago I was strong and healthy, but then *you* came, the troubles of my country commenced, and I am become what you now see me."

Supper now made its appearance. The Kaïd, taking the two enormous dishes of couscousoo from the women who had brought them up from the foot of the hill, where they had been prepared, placed them himself before us. Couscousoo, the national dish of Northern Africa, is prepared as follows. Flour is wetted, kneaded into a sort of paste, half dried in the sun, and then granulated by rubbing between the hands ; placed again in the sun, the grains become hard, and, when kept in a dry place, remain good for years. When wanted for use it is cooked in the following manner. A large vessel containing water at the bottom, and the meat to be dressed, whatever it may be, is placed on the fire ; over this, halfway up, is fixed a perforated plate, on which the couscousoo is placed, mixed with pepper, spices, vegetables, &c., according to taste and means, sometimes being quite plain ; the pot is then covered, and the steam ascend-

ing through the holes in the division, confined also by the lid, dresses the couscousoo, which, when sufficiently done, is turned out into a flattish wooden bowl, with a central leg a foot and a half high.

The meat boiled at the bottom is torn into pieces and strewn over the top, often with a handful of soft sugar ; the broth is generally thrown away, except a portion, which, mixed with milk, sugar, honey, or butter, is poured into the middle when the guests have taken their places and are ready to begin ; cold milk alone is, however, often used for this purpose.

Asking the Kaïd to sit down and eat with us, two parties were formed, one round each dish, and rudely cut wooden spoons, made somewhat after the fashion of a child's spade, being furnished to each person, a series of holes dug to the bottom of the dish soon showed, by their breadth and depth, that the couscousoo was as good as our appetites.

Our host was most attentive, pulling the lumps of mutton to pieces with his own fingers, and presenting us with the choicest morsels. During the meal, water, and both

sweet and sour milk, were handed round. When we had finished, the remnant of the feast was passed to the Arabs outside, who soon cleared off what we had left, the elderly men helping themselves first ; not, however, taking more than their share, although there were several of them who very seldom had an opportunity of partaking of a dish like this, except on great occasions ; the younger ones behaved with equal propriety, neither scrambling nor greediness was to be observed amongst them.

Our supper was finished with the partridges, which proved excellent, and a few glasses of capital Bordeaux, and, as we were to be up at peep of day, we commenced settling ourselves for the night. The sleeping arrangements were very simple, and therefore soon made : a saddle or a valise served for a pillow, and, rolling ourselves up in our cloaks, we lay down to sleep.

Having been well fed ourselves, it was now—according to the law of nature, that animals should prey on each other—our turn to be fed upon. It was useless struggling against what must be, and perceiving



that the advanced guard of the invaders had already entered the works at a weak point, the junction of the trousers and the boots, I resigned myself to my fate, and, defying the fleas to do their worst, was sound asleep in another minute.

Day was breaking, when we were aroused next morning by the arrival of a party of the Arabs who were to assist at the hunt. The morning was bitterly cold, the thermometer standing at 43 degrees, and a dense mist covering the face of the mountains rendered objects at twenty yards invisible. The sun was just rising red and angry through the fog, when we set forth for the spot that had been fixed upon by the Arabs for our first beat, where we arrived after half an hour's walk. In the meantime the aspect of the morning was changed ; the sun, having dispersed the mist, shone gloriously, giving promise of a fine day.

Fifty Arabs were collected when we came up, a number that afterwards swelled to nearly two hundred, many of them mounted, who, having heard what was going on, joined us from the neighbouring tribes ; a multitude

of dogs was also gathered together, for where the brush-wood is so thick it is difficult to force the boars to break cover without actually coming upon them, and therefore any little barking cur that has a tolerable nose is useful.

The Righas are held the best sportsmen in this part of the Atlas, and are passionately fond of hunting; a single man will sometimes follow a boar for two or three days by the track, and kill him at last with a single dog, seldom firing unless within a few yards; when killed, the only use they make of the meat is to feed their dogs, and, if near a French station, they occasionally take it there for sale. Some of the dogs are handsome, powerful animals, resembling those bred in England between a greyhound and a foxhound, are courageous, and will singly attack a boar. These dogs are rare, and valued accordingly, a fine one being seldom parted with by an Arab unless tempted by a high price.

The place of rendezvous was the summit of a wooded ridge, sloping gradually down to a ravine below, the ground narrowing with the

declivity, and enclosed on both hands by the steep sides of the surrounding mountains. The twenty voltigeurs, placed at intervals among the Arabs, were formed in an extended line along the ridge, two of the guns, and all the dogs, remained with them; the rest of the guns, descending quietly, were posted on the bank of a small stream that ran through the valley, at the points where it was considered probable that the boars would attempt to pass.

When we were all placed, the signal was given from below, and the line advanced, making as much noise as possible in beating the cover, the infantry firing blank cartridge, the Arabs shouting, and the dogs barking. Nothing, however, was found; and the two next ravines were also drawn blank. In the fourth beat we were more fortunate; recent traces of the presence of the game were discovered. The boar could not be far off, and laying on the dogs, a dozen voices roared out, "Haloof, haloof" (pig, pig), a general rush was made in the direction of those who had viewed the game, the noise redoubled, and the scene became most exciting. The ra-

vine, steep, rocky, and clothed with thick brushwood, seemed to be alive with men, the burnished barrels of the voltigeurs glancing in the sunlight as they pushed forward from bush to bush, keeping up an irregular fire, each shot marked by a curl of white smoke rising from the copse, and the report repeated again and again, echoing among the hills. The Arabs, with their long guns, and the loose folds of their ber-nouses waving in the air as they rushed at full speed over the roughest ground, mingled their wild cries with the yelling and barking of the dogs ; on the ridges overlooking the ravine the horsemen watching the motions of those below to enable them to cut off the boars if they should take to the hill, were galloping about at a fearful pace over rocks and stones, now lost sight of in some deep gully, then seen clambering from rock to rock, their animals more like goats than horses, and having regained the crest, every movement of the steeds and their excited riders was visible to us below, each figure standing out in bold relief against the deep blue of a cloudless sky.

Notwithstanding the exertions of the mounted party, the game crossed the hill into the neighbouring ravine, but not until a two year old had been shot by an Arab, and a fine old boar severely hit. He managed to get away, and we afterwards heard, on our return to Medeah, that he had been tracked, and sent to General Marey a day or two after by the Arabs.

The chase having taken a contrary direction to our camp, we had a long walk before us under a broiling sun, the breeze had died away, and the stunted trees and bushes afforded no shade at noon. At one o'clock we reached the tent, where the thermometer in the shade stood at 92 degrees, after eight hours' hard work, well repaid for our labour by the magnificence of the scenery, and the excitement of a sport so novel in all its features.

During the morning one of the party had a narrow escape, from the accidental discharge of a pistol; had the direction of the muzzle, at the instant when it was fired, been changed even an eighth of an inch to either side, he must have been severely hurt;

as it was, he most providentially escaped with a slight wound, which, although painful, was not serious.

At three o'clock the officers and the detachment from Medeah commenced their homeward march. In the course of an hour afterwards we started for the dashera\* of the Haouera tribe, distant about three leagues. The Kaïd was unwilling to part with us, as he considered it rather throwing a reflection on his hospitality, leaving him so near sun-down. Our party, reduced in number, still made a respectable appearance, consisting of Captain Martenot, two servants, with a spare horse and the baggage mule, the escort of four Spahis and our three selves; the Kaïd's son, and three or four of his tribe, also accompanied us as guides.

Leaving the wooded country, we proceeded in a south-easterly direction across an elevated plateau of some extent, quite bare of underwood, but good pasture land, with here and there a patch of corn-field; a couple of brace of partridges were shot on the way,

\* *Dashera*, a village, a collection of huts. An Arab encampment is called a *Douar*.

and it was dark by the time we arrived at the edge of the valley, where, looking down, we could see the fire burning brightly in front of the tent prepared for us, and the shadowy figures grouped around waiting to welcome the expected guests.

Giving the horses their heads, they picked their way down the almost perpendicular side of the hill, dark as it was, without making a false step, and riding up to the fire, we found Mansour, the Kaïd of the tribe, waiting to receive us. Two tents had been pitched under a grove of fine old trees—one for us, and the other for the Spahis and Arabs. The supper was couscousoo, the same as yesterday; and the day's work having entitled us to enjoy a good night's rest, in spite of the assaults of our nocturnal enemies, the fire was supplied with fresh fuel, and quiet soon reigned in the camp.

*March 16th.* The whole party stirring at sunrise, and having a ride of eight or nine hours before us to Boghar, only waited for the breakfast the Kaïd's women were getting ready. On looking about in daylight, we found the village of the Haoueras fifty yards

from the tents, placed under the cliff we had descended the previous evening, which looked steeper now than it had seemed to be in the dark. The village was placed on a slope, for the advantage of draining, and numbered about a dozen huts, built of stone and mud, in an oblong form, the door, which also answers the purpose of a window, being placed at the end.

The walls, seldom more than four feet high, are covered with a slanting roof made of the large branches of trees, and thatched with straw or reeds; the earth cleared of stones, and beaten hard, forms the floor, with a hole scratched in it for the fireplace, and the furniture usually consists of a stone mill for grinding corn, a few pots, a lamp—merely an earthen saucer, with a lip to receive the wick—and half a dozen rush mats for sleeping on.

Such are in general the primitive habitations of these Arab tribes, who, having forsaken the plains, and dwelling in the mountains, are become an agricultural, in place of a pastoral, race. The Kaïd alone, or perhaps



some wealthy individual, possesses a tent and carpets such as had been furnished for our use the two last nights.

Two women now approached the tents bearing our breakfast; they did not come nearer than the edge of the clump of trees, at which place the men relieved them of the dishes; the younger of the two, who was rather good-looking, remained a moment or two staring at us, and did not seem to object to being examined in turn, at the distance of ten paces. The shrill, angry voice of an old woman who had been watching at the door of her hut the safe transit of the dishes, probably her own handiwork, recalled the girl in haste, and I doubt not but that she paid dearly enough for the gratification of her curiosity.

The breakfast was excellent, and did the old woman much credit, besides serving as an apology for her scolding tongue, as we all know that at home cooks are not famed for the equanimity of their tempers when engaged in the kitchen, and it was therefore likely that the anxiety to do well, joined to

the heat of the fire, may have added somewhat to the warmth of her temper. The principal dish, and the one on which she had lavished her skill, was called Beghir, and made of hot cakes, full of little cells, like a crumpet, soaked in equal quantities of honey and melted butter.

We helped ourselves with our fingers, fishing out the pieces of cake, and by a dexterous twist securing for each morsel its fair proportion of butter and honey; hard boiled eggs, and milk, both sour and sweet, formed the rest of our meal. In eating we only made use of our right hand, following the custom of the Arabs (almost universal throughout the East), who never touch the food with the left hand except when it cannot be avoided—as, for instance, in separating a large piece of meat, or clawing a fowl asunder.

At six o'clock we set out, accompanied by two Arabs, who were to guide us into the road which connects Medeah and Boghar. Thanks to the kindness of Captain Martenot, I was to-day well mounted on his spare horse, a handsome spirited iron grey, well bred, and as active as a cat, which he

lent to each of us in turn, mounting one of his servants on the Bleedah pony.

The weather was delightful, bright and sunny, without being like the preceding day, too hot. Our route lay down the rich and cultivated valley, at the upper end of which the Haouera village is placed; a fertilizing stream, as clear as crystal, wound along the bottom of the glen, enclosed on either hand by the wooded and craggy sides of the sheltering mountains.

On this valley nature had bestowed her choicest favours—beautiful scenery, a fruitful soil, and a delicious climate—and here it was cheering to find that man had not received her bounties with indifference: for upwards of an hour we rode through a succession of fields green with the newly-sprung corn, interspersed with patches of vines, melons, pumpkins, and a few vegetables; whilst, scattered about on the slopes, and on the banks of the stream, numerous almond trees covered with a profusion of delicate blossoms, together with the fig and the olive, were thriving luxuriantly.

After leaving the valley, we traversed a succession of rocky ridges, partially clothed

with stunted trees and brushwood ; a few patches of cultivated land were seen at intervals, and the country we passed through on this day swarmed with the red-legged partridge. The morning was getting rather warm, when, at the end of three hours, we entered the direct road between Medeah and Boghar. At noon we halted under the shade of a clump of large firs, growing on the picturesque banks of a mountain stream, which at this spot fell gently over a rocky barrier that crossed its bed. During this halt, I had the first quiet opportunity of examining our escort. The Spahis are the Arab irregular cavalry, in the pay of France. For their pay they provide themselves with horses, accoutrements, clothing, and provisions ; their arms are now furnished by Government, as the native weapons are of so inferior a quality : they consist of a cavalry sword attached to the saddle, on the near side, under the flap, with the hilt close to the pommel, so that, when mounted, the sword lies under the left thigh ; the long Arab seven foot gun is replaced by a French musket, carried either in front across the saddle, or slung at the back. Their

saddlery and equipments are the same as those of any respectable Arab, and to distinguish them in action they wear the upper bernous red, instead of white or brown. The horses of our escort were tolerable, but the appearance of the finest animal of the four was ruined by the custom of shaving the tails of young horses, to strengthen the hair, which in our eyes had a most absurd appearance, as, when the hair begins to grow, it sticks out stiff all round, like the bristles of a brush.

Resuming our march, after an hour's ride we descended into the valley of the Cheleeff, the principal river of Algeria. In a plain on its banks we saw a douar, or encampment of the Bedouen Arabs—the first we had seen pitched in the form of a circle, with the openings, when practicable, towards the east; and in the centre of which the flocks and herds are placed, during the night, for safety. Several large flocks of camels were feeding in the vicinity, and the slopes of the rising were covered with sheep and cattle. Proceeding along the western bank of the Cheleeff, we commenced the ascent of the spur of the mountain upon which Boghar

is built. When half way up, we were met by the officers of the garrison, who had ridden out to receive us, and at five o'clock we entered the little frontier fortress. In the evening we arranged our plans for visiting the tribes of the Little Desert, and took up our quarters in a spare ward in the Hospital—a room superior, in point of size and comfort, to that of any officer in the post.

## CHAPTER VI.

Boghar—Its commanding situation—Roman remains—Capture in 1841—Present state—Grotto—Reflections on the past—Market day—Family party—Importance of Boghar to the French—Trade with the interior—The Nomadic tribes—Their yearly wanderings and traffic—Probable diversion of trade from its ancient channels—Cross the Cheleeff—Arabic legend—The Little Desert—Horsemanship—Thunderstorm—Arrive at the douar of the Oulad—Mocktar—Sketching—Grand entertainment—Ben-Aouda ; his personal appearance and history.

THE hour fixed for the setting out of the party being ten o'clock, we had sufficient time to examine the fort and its environs, in the morning, before breakfast. As an advanced post, Boghar has been well chosen by the conquering nations, who have successively overrun the country.

On the western bank of the Cheleeff, forty leagues to the southward of Algiers, and perched on the crest of a rocky promontory,

projecting into and overlooking the wide plain of the Little Desert, it serves, at the same time, to hold in check both the stationary inhabitants of the Atlas and the migratory tribes of the desert, who, equally dependant upon each other for many of the necessities of life, meet at stated times on the bank of the Cheleeff, near Boghar, to exchange the produce of the mountain and the plain. Rising in the calcareous rock are several springs of pure water, which, affording an abundant supply at all seasons of the year, probably led to the formation of a military position by the Romans, on the spot.

In clearing the ground for the establishment of the present post, and in excavating the ditch which protects it on the southern side, many traces were discovered of the Roman occupation—foundations of buildings, dressed stones, and a few coins, amongst them a Roman gold coin, described as being in a fine state of preservation, but which unfortunately had been concealed by the soldier who had found it, and sold to a Jew in Algiers, without having been shown to any one competent to fix the date.



In the month of May, 1841, Boghar, and Thaza, a small fortress thirteen or fourteen leagues to the westward, were taken possession of by a force under the command of General Baraguay d'Hilliers, without opposition, the Arabs having evacuated and burnt them, on the approach of the French troops. Their capture was a severe blow to Abd-el-Kader, who had considered the positions of the two forts as beyond the reach of the French arms. A few miserable Arab huts still remain near the fort, which has itself been lately re-established, with a small garrison of a hundred and twenty men, as the frontier post of the province of Tittery.

The defences of the place are but slight; strong palisades, which enclose the western and northern faces, a dry ditch and earthen rampart on the south, and on the eastern side the exterior wall of the officers' quarters, loopholed and built on the edge of the natural declivity of the mountain descending towards the river, are sufficient protection to enable the slender garrison to set at defiance any force that the tribes could gather against them. Two light field-pieces are mounted on the upper angle of the works, and a strong

blockhouse occupies the summit of the hill which commands the fort. In the interior are the quarters of the officers and men, and the hospital, which, as is the case at all the other stations in Algeria, appears to receive the principal attention of the authorities, for while the former consist only of rows of small cottages, the latter is substantially built, and is, even in this petty post on the verge of the desert, supplied with every possible accommodation and comfort for the sick.

During the greater portion of the year the climate of Boghar is tolerably healthy ; in the months of July, August, and September, when the heat is the greatest, fevers, principally of the intermittent type, are prevalent, and the garrison also suffers much annoyance from the hot winds of the desert, which occasionally blow with great violence, charged with clouds of dust and almost impalpable sand.

Looking towards the south, the eye wanders at a glance over the broad undulating expanse of the Little Desert, unbroken save by the shining surfaces of the lakes ten leagues distant, which we were about to visit.

In the far distance rise the blue summits of the lofty mountains of the Djebel Ammour, the northern boundary of the Great Sahara Desert, a portion of the gigantic range stretching from the Atlantic to the confines of Lybia, placed by nature a mighty barrier between the regions of life and death, separating fruitfulness from sterility, and marking the limits of the barren waste spread in dreary desolation over a fourth of Africa.

Near at hand, in the limestone rock, is a natural grotto, almost concealed by an aged fig-tree growing out of the entrance. It is the very spot to rejoice the heart of a romantic dreamer, shady and cool when all without is blazing in the rays of a burning sun; some passing breeze occasionally stirring the broad green leaves that veil the opening, grants glimpses of the plain below; the gentle rustling of the foliage alone breaks the stillness of the noon-day, the mind yields insensibly to the charm, the present is forgotten, and the imagination, teeming with busy fancies, peoples the scene with the actors of bygone centuries, recalling in quick succession the Numidian struggling in vain against the all-conquering power of Rome;

the decline of paganism ; the dawn and promising morning of Christianity, when Africa boasted of her martyrs, her persecutions endured and gloried in, and could number eight hundred bishopricks throughout her provinces ; the fall of the Romans ; the invasion of the Vandals ; the last feeble efforts of the enervate eagle that once flew victorious over the known world ; the quenching of the pure light of the gospel in blood, and the Cross overwhelmed in the fierce tide of the Saracenic invasion, so utterly swept from the face of the land, that hardly a trace remains to tell the passing traveller that here for centuries flourished the church of Christ ; the mind then plunging sadly into the dark period of Mahometan rule, crowds the stage with a long array of fanatic warriors, holding Europe herself in awe—when the sharp roll of the garrison drums, striking cheerfully on the ear, dispels the visions of the past, and awakens the dreamer to the reality that a new era in the history of Africa has commenced.

At half-past ten we left the fort, our party increased by four out of the six officers of the garrison, and descending the mountain,

arrived at the plain near the bank of the river where the fairs and markets are held. This being a market-day, a couple of hundred Arabs were collected, with a due proportion of horses, camels, cattle, and sheep; five ragged tents were pitched on the slope, belonging to parties from a distance, whose wives and families had accompanied them. The business had been transacted in the morning, many were preparing for their homeward journey, and others had already started.

One party especially attracted my attention, consisting of a man, his two wives, and six children; a camel and three donkeys carried all that they possessed in the world. A tent and the dirty bags that held the spare clothes and household sundries, were neatly packed, with the tent-poles fore and aft, on the camel's back, whose burden was made up with leathern water bags, a handmill, and metal cooking pots suspended on either side. Each donkey carried a sack of corn, the produce of the morning's barter, as big as itself. One of the women, with a bundle of rags on her back, that on close inspection proved to be a baby, led an elder child by the hand,

nor was the other, although unoccupied with maternal duties, idle,—as heavily laden as the asses, she trudged along as patiently, while the lord of the creation, carrying nothing but his gun, lounged quietly by the side of his camel, leaving the task of donkey driving to the boys.

This family had probably several days to march before they would rejoin their tribe, proceeding by easy journeys, and halting at any spot that might be convenient, only taking care to avoid the neighbourhood of hostile tribes with whom their own might happen to be at variance. A short time serves to unload the camel, spread the mats, and pitch the tent. A few handfuls of corn, ground in the mill, kneaded into a paste with water, and baked in thin cakes on the fire, with a drink of water, or, if they have it, of milk, forms their simple meal. In the morning the tent is struck with the same facility that it was pitched the evening before, the baggage reloaded, and the journey resumed day after day until their destination is reached.

In the autumn, when the great fair is held, several thousand people are gathered toge-

ther ; the wandering Bedoueens from the desert bring the produce of their herds and flocks, exchanging hides, cheese, butter, and wool, together with dates, skins of wild beasts, ostrich feathers, &c. received from the interior, and the woollen manufactures of the Arab women, for corn, honey, oil, and the few articles of European merchandize they value, such as cutlery and cotton cloths, the sale of arms and ammunition, formerly the principal objects of traffic, having been prohibited by the French. Horses are also sold, and a valuable animal may be picked up by chance. This annual fair is of great value to the French government, as it enables them to collect the tribute which otherwise they could not do from the more distant tribes, whose necessities, joined to the calculation they have made that the profit of the trade is greater than the amount of the tax, are the powerful causes which induce many to allow their hatred to be overcome by their avarice.

The importation of French manufactures has been rapidly increasing, and if the district remains tolerably quiet for the next year or two, the fairs of Boghar, as the position

nearest the seaport of Algiers in the direct line between it and some of the richest and most populous regions of the interior, must become the great marts of Northern Africa south of the lesser Atlas, which hitherto has been supplied with foreign manufactures by the roundabout routes of Morocco on one side, and those of Tunis and Tripoli on the other. In the former the trade is and has been for a long period in the hands of the English; in the two latter, the French and Italians share it with us. The policy and regulations of the late Algerine government, together with the difficulty of transport through the passes of the Atlas, were the causes that forced the current of the trade to flow in such lengthened and expensive channels.

These great obstacles are now removed, at least, from the path of the French merchants; French manufactures, shipped on board French vessels, are exported to Algiers, and landed under the wing of a heavy protective duty, which has the effect of excluding from competition the goods of other nations. Roads have been made, and are now in progress through the Atlas, following



a straight line, drawn from the city of Algiers to the verge of the Desert: the pacification of the country, and submission of the tribes between Bleedah and Boghar, give a cheap, and at present a safe route, by which a market may be reached, geographically convenient to the producer and consumer, and equally beneficial to both parties; the wants of the native population are supplied at a lower rate than was possible by the old channels, and the merchants relieved of the onerous burden of a tedious and expensive land carriage, exposed, moreover, to many risks from weather and from violence, are able at the same time to increase their profits and extend their trade.

Besides the supply of the districts in the immediate vicinity of the French territories, a new line is developing itself for the extension of her commerce, which, if entered upon with judgment and enterprise, cannot fail to prove most advantageous to France.

The active agents by whom this commerce has been commenced, and through whom it will be conducted, are the Nomadic tribes of the Great Sahara, who, without fixed dwelling places, are still obliged, by

the natural change of the seasons, to follow a certain annual plan in their wanderings. The winter and spring are passed in feeding their flocks on the plateau of the desert, where, during those seasons, they find water and pasturage. Towards the end of the spring, when these are both growing scarce, they visit the Saharian towns and villages, whose inhabitants, leading a sedentary life, occupy themselves with the culture of the date palm, and in woollen manufactures, which are principally the work of the women, and find a ready sale in Algeria and Morocco. Loading their camels with dates, woollens, and perhaps a few articles from remoter parts of the interior, they move northwards at the period when the Desert, at this time of the year worthy of its name, affords neither herbage or water, to the more hospitable plains on the south side of the Atlas, where both are to be found. Soon after their arrival the harvest takes place, corn is plentiful in the market, and at its lowest price. Trade goes on briskly for some time, the summer passes away, and the tribes set out, on their return to the Sahara, laden with corn and goods that they have

received in exchange for the produce of the south. Marching by short and easy stages, they arrive, towards the end of autumn, at the points from which they had started at the commencement of the past summer. They now find the dates ripe, and the gathering, which is the harvest of the Sahara, going on. A market is established, the people supply themselves with corn, &c. ; thus paying, with the present crop of dates, for the articles that had been purchased with the crop of the previous year : the woollens made during the twelve months are also disposed of at this time. The transactions of the season are now closed by the Arabs placing the dates and goods in store, to await the journey of the ensuing year ; then, wandering forth into the Desert, they roam about during the winter and spring, until the approach of summer compels them to resume the same routine.

It is easy to perceive what an opening •a regular system such as this, that has endured for centuries, offers for the extension of commerce. In the interior, the routes taken by the caravans trading with Mogador to the west, and with Tunis and Tripoli to

the east ; by which ports, more particularly by the former, the greater part of the export trade is carried on, and European fabrics introduced, are neither so accessible, so safe, nor so direct as the northern route to Algiers, to which eventually the preference will be given by an extensive tract of country, although it will probably take many years to divert the trade from its long-established course. Sooner or later this must happen ; and the result will be, that a considerable portion of the exports of the interior, instead of passing, as heretofore, through the hands of the British merchants of Mogador, &c., will swell the trade of Algiers ; French manufactures thus replacing those of Great Britain.

I hope that I shall be forgiven for having detained the reader, wandering so long on the banks of the river, where our party did not remain in reality five minutes.

The Cheleeff, concealed in a deep bed worn in the sandy soil of the Little Desert, is hardly visible until the brink is reached. At the spot where we crossed, a zig-zag path on either bank renders the ford accessible ; the water was rather higher than yes-

terday, and we just managed to get across without a ducking. A casual remark made on the steepness of the banks, and the difficulty of reaching the bed of the river, led to the relation of the Arabic legend, accounting for the origin and the formation of the Cheleeff.

Many centuries ago, there lived Sidi-el-Arhibi, Agha of Mostaganem, a chief renowned for his wealth and courage, and, above all, for his piety. Wandering with his tents and flocks from pasture to pasture, it happened, that one day, when, according to custom, his daughter went forth with the women of the household to draw water from the only well near at hand, they found, on arriving, a party of Arabs already in possession, who received the women with jeers and insults, driving them from the well, and forcing them to return homewards without water. The first impulse of Sidi-el-Arhibi, on hearing of the insults offered to his daughter, was revenge. Controlling, however, his passion, he remained for a short time meditating in silence, then, turning towards Mecca, and calling upon God and the Prophet for assistance, he laid his curse

upon the well that had been the scene of such unwonted inhospitality, which, from that moment, became for ever dry. Unwilling to irremediably injure the country, he added, that power had been given him both to punish and to do good, and, mounting his favourite mare, rode furiously towards the sea—a river rising behind, as he galloped, at full speed, across the plain. The Cheleeff, the principal river in Algeria, whose waters in their course fertilize the extensive districts through which they pass, rises at the spot from whence he started, which is now called the Sebaoun Aïoun, or the Seventy Fountains, and flows in the exact route followed by Sidi-el-Arhibi, who reached the shore of the Mediterranean, near Mostaganem, where, at the present day, the Cheleeff joins the sea. The steep banks were placed as a lasting punishment to the inhospitable tribes and their descendants, who, from that time to this, have drawn with toil and labour from the river the supplies of water which their forefathers obtained with ease from the well. The legend goes on to relate that it was a hot day in summer when this occurrence took

place, and that the mare he rode, much tormented by the flies, formed the numerous bends and windings of the river by the whisking of her tail.

We proceeded in a southerly direction across the plain, which, covered with short grass and perfectly level, was too tempting an arena for the display of their skill in arms and horsemanship to be overlooked by the Spahis of our escort. Dashing forward at full speed, flourishing their guns in the air, and shouting "Fantazia, Fantazia!" they crossed and recrossed in every direction, sometimes attacking and pursuing each other, or charging us, standing up in their short stirrups with presented arms, as if about to fire, and when within a few paces suddenly wheeling, or checking their horses so severely with the bit, that, thrown violently on their haunches, it appeared as if both men and horses were coming to the ground, then recovering, after an instant's pause they would turn as on a pivot, and spring off in an opposite direction. The excitement was shared by the whole party; even our little horses, inspirited by example and full of barley, scampered along as proudly as if

they had been the descendants of the purest Arab blood.

The heat of the day, as well as the necessity of allowing the mule with the baggage to keep up with us, soon forced us to moderate our pace. After an hour's ride, the turf became chequered with barren spots, and as we advanced towards a rocky ridge that crossed the plain from east to west, the herbage grew more scanty, and the patches of sand and gravel increased in size and number. After passing the chain of rocks, where we made a short halt, the vegetation almost ceased, and for an hour and a half our route lay among sandy hillocks, with tufts of grass, or dwarf shrubs a few inches high, scattered here and there.

The breeze had entirely died away, an oppressive stillness was in the air, and man and beast, so lately full of life and spirit, laboured along heavily through the loose stones and sand. A small dark cloud rose in the south-west, the hitherto clear sky became rapidly overcast, and ten minutes after the first appearance of the black speck a violent thunderstorm burst over our heads, rain fell in torrents, vivid flashes of light-



ning darting from the centre of the clouds, ran along the ground, and the thunder rolled over the plain until caught up by the mountains, then echoing again and again from peak to peak, the last sound died faintly away among the distant valleys of the Atlas. Accompanied by a high wind, the storm passed over as quickly as it had arisen, the sky again appeared as calm and clear as before, and the only traces that remained were the refreshing coolness of the air, and the rain-drops glittering among the leaves of the scanty herbage.

Crossing a low range of stony hillocks, we entered upon a grassy plain nearly level, extending in long swelling undulations towards the south. Deep fissures in the earth, formed by the rains of winter, intersect the plain at intervals, and carry the water towards the Cheleeff, the principal drain of the Little Desert.

Continuing for three hours, falling in occasionally with flocks of camels herded by armed men, we arrived at the banks of a small river, flowing through, or rather forming, a morass, extending on each side for a considerable distance. We floundered

through the middle of the muddy stream with no other casualty than the mule slipping down the bank, and pitching his rider into the water. Wading for half an hour up to the horse's knees in mud and water, covered with sedges and long coarse grass, we reached firm ground, and came in sight of our destination, a circle of black tents pitched on the plain, still two miles distant.

It was nearly six o'clock when we arrived at the douar. Ben-Aouda, chief of the tribe of Oulad-Mocktar, and Agha of the Little Desert, received us himself in front of the tent prepared for our party. After the usual compliments had passed, dates and "leben," or sour milk, were offered to us, as the evening meal would not be ready for some time. There was evidently a large number of people collected, and the douar seemed to be in an unusual state of excitement; a crowd, which our arrival had broken up for a short time, had gathered in front of a tent, and the sound of music, the shrill cries of the women, and repeated discharges of fire-arms, shewed that something was going forward, which, on inquiry, proved to

be the rejoicings held in honour of the marriage of the Agha's son.

Some of the party rambled out with their guns in the neighbourhood, and I occupied myself in sketching the encampment, as well as the crowd of Arabs who formed a circle around would allow me. The curiosity excited by this simple proceeding was very great; I could not make them understand that it was not possible to see through them. As soon as I had succeeded in clearing an avenue, and took my eyes off them for a moment, when I looked up again it was closed; I sat down, hoping they would get tired and go away; it was of no avail, they squatted down also. I now thought it was all right: as long as they remained seated, I, by standing up, could see over their heads; hardly, however, had I made a stroke, when, seeing me recommence, the standing circle was re-formed with the greatest gravity and decorum; there was no crowding or pushing, and no noise, they gave me plenty of room, and they did everything I wished them to do—except get out of the way. I was about to give it up in despair, when a very handsome boy, a

grandson of the Agha's, of nine or ten years old, who had attached himself to me since our arrival, found out what I wanted ; and, explaining to the others the state of the case, they immediately drew back to the rear.

As the sun set, the horses, flocks, and herds that had left the encampment in the morning, were seen approaching the douar from all sides, it being the invariable practice to enclose them during the night in the centre of the circle formed by the tents, both for security against robbers and to prevent straying. The call to evening prayer was given, and pleasure, as well as business, gave place, for a few minutes, to the duties of their religion.

Having arrived in time to partake of the wedding-feast, our supper was on a grand scale. The first dish was "hamis," prepared by stewing small pieces of mutton in sweet sauce, and seasoned with red pepper ; then two sheep roasted whole, each carried upright on a wooden spit, and preceded by a blazing torch, were paraded in front of our tent ; one was sent to our escort and servants, and the other, attacked by a dozen knives, was cut up in our presence ;



and, in an incredibly short space of time after their first appearance, several wooden dishes, heaped with fragments of mutton, tender, juicy, and roasted to perfection, were placed before us. Three large dishes of couscousoo followed; and, after a short interval, the entertainment was wound up with stewed gazelle, garnished with thin unleavened cakes of wheaten flour. Ample justice was done by all to the Agha's hospitality, and the roast mutton and gazelle were unanimously pronounced, especially the latter, to be excellent.

Ben-Aouda, on our invitation, joined us at supper, and played well his part of a courteous host, pressing us to eat, and fishing out with his fingers the most delicate morsels from the depths of the gravy, which he placed on the edge of the dish for our convenience.

As the most powerful Arab chief in the district, and having the reputation of talent, we regarded him with interest. He is about fifty years of age, rather above the middle size, with handsome though harsh features, of the true Arab cast, and was plainly dressed in a white bernous. What struck

me most in his appearance, was the expression of deep cunning strongly marked in the lines that crossed his forehead, and in the downcast and furtive glances of the eyes, observing everything, yet seemingly inattentive.

Of ancient family—and there are few nations who lay more store upon birth and pedigree than the Arabs—wealthy, talented, and the head of the powerful tribe of the Oulad-Mocktar, he joined in the first attempts to repel the invaders of his country. For a considerable period he acted as one of Abd-el-Kader's most trusted lieutenants; but, foreseeing what must be the inevitable result of the struggle, and perhaps also influenced by jealousy of Abd-el-Kader's superiority, at rather a critical moment he went over to the French, deserting and then attacking his own countrymen; by these means he secured to his tribe their possessions, under the French Government; and, as his own price, received the appointment of Agha over the tribes of the Little Desert, with the allowance of a tenth part of the tribute paid by the tribes under his jurisdiction, which

may be computed at upwards of ten thousand francs per annum.

Attached to the French by the powerful ties of self-interest, his adhesion to their cause tended greatly towards the pacification of an extensive district ; and, as long as he considers it advantageous, he will, doubtless, side with them as the strongest ; but the man who has once abandoned his friends, is not likely to hesitate, when opportunity offers, to betray his enemies. I look upon Ben-Aouda as a fair type of the Arab chiefs in the pay of France ; influenced by the prudential motives of fear or avarice (and many are well aware of the utter hopelessness of a struggle at the present time), they conceal their hatred of the nation that has curbed their independence, and whom they are enjoined by their religion to despise, looking forward to a period when they may renew the contest with a chance of success.

Under existing circumstances, the part taken by Ben-Aouda, however base it appears in our eyes, admits of palliation when we consider the want of union among the Arabs, held together by no universal in-

terest, the ties of a common ancestry, language, and religion, are weakened by the constant succession of wars and feuds between tribes and families; so that, accustomed from earliest childhood to see Arab opposed to Arab, living, perhaps, in a state of deadly enmity with their nearest neighbours, those feelings of abhorrence with which we regard the man who deserts and turns against his countrymen, are not felt by them with the same intensity; his tribe, moreover, was prosperous, and located in an open plain exposed to the razzias of the French troops, if he had remained at war, sooner or later their ruin was certain; and lastly, in addition, he himself, who was rich, would have lost all that he possessed.



## CHAPTER VII.

Morning scene in the douar—Visit to the Dahias—Flamingoes—Marriage rejoicings—Woman's dress—Dancing—Fantazia—Accident—Arab marriages and divorces—Condition of an Arab woman—Complaint and decision against a Kaïd—French and English—Take leave of Ben-Aouda—Arab hospitality—Cultivation of the soil—Silos—Their destruction by the French troops—Arab burying-ground—Return to Boghar.

AWAKENED next morning by the dawn of day, and by the various sounds that increasing each moment, arose from the crowd of animals, which having passed the night inside the circle of the douar, and impatient to regain their liberty, were expressing their feelings, each after his kind, in the loudest key, I stood at the entrance of the tent, and watched the busy scene. A pace or two in front were our horses, tethered by the fore feet to a long rope stretched on the ground and

fastened down by strong pegs ; beyond were camels, sheep, goats, and cattle confusedly huddled together, and men, women, and children all actively employed in milking, and separating the herds.

The camels stood patiently, waiting to be milked ; the young ones, staid, quiet-looking little things, all hump, scarce seemed to have a frisk in them, gambolling awkwardly about their mothers, endeavouring first on one side and then on the other, to push away the nets which, preventing them from sucking during the night, secured a share of the milk for their owners, who, when they have helped themselves, remove the net. A little farther off, children were catching the ewes and goats for the women to milk (the camels being a task for the men). In another quarter the brood mares and foals were collecting. The sheep and goats were flocking together. The seeming confusion was subsiding, and one after another the herds began to move slowly off towards the spots assigned for the day's pasturage. A few of the camels, left to the last, were hopping about on three legs eager to be off ; each having a fore leg doubled and kept

confined in that position by a loop of cord slipped over the knee, to prevent straying. In a short time quiet was restored to the douar. By means of a rough calculation, I estimated the number to be about 3000 head of various kinds of stock, the camels which I counted amounting to nearly 500, including the young.

The Agha now came to pay his respects, and to say that the party who were to conduct us to the dahias (the lakes) were ready to start whenever we wished. Dates and milk were brought for our breakfast; and at seven o'clock we set out at a smart canter, accompanied by Ben-Aouda's brother and five or six Arabs; the former was mounted on a handsome mare, his bridle and saddle beautifully embroidered in gold, and ornamented with thin silver plates, contrasted somewhat oddly with a rather dirty white bernous, as did also his bare legs and feet with a pair of gilt stirrups.

Passing several other douars and large herds of camels, &c., a ride of seven miles over the plain brought us to the nearest of the lakes. Nearly dry in summer, in winter and spring they are of some considerable

extent, though shallow, and at these seasons covered with innumerable flocks of wild fowl of every description. We visited four, situated within a short distance of each other, the largest about two miles in length by half a mile in breadth, and the smallest, which appeared to be deeper than the others, hardly two hundred yards in diameter.

At the upper end of the largest dahia we found a numerous flock of flamingoes, wading in the shallow water, and marching gravely about like so many soldiers in a white and red uniform. They were too wary to let us come within shot, and the banks of the lake not affording the cover of even a stunted bush, we were obliged to content ourselves with watching their manœuvres, and when, alarmed at our nearer approach, they rose screaming into the air, their long necks extended in front, and legs stretched out behind, gave them the appearance of sticks borne along by enormous wings at a rapid rate. As they passed over head, a ball fired into the midst changed the direction of their flight, and as each bird turned from its course the beautiful crimson

of its glossy plumage shone more brilliantly than before, then after circling twice round, each time higher and higher, as if unwilling to leave a favourite spot, they darted off in a direct line towards another of the lakes some miles distant. We fired a few shots at the water-fowl scattered over the lakes in great number, but they were shy, and very little execution was done among them. On the way back to the douar, several birds of the bustard species were fallen in with, and three shot.

At eleven o'clock we regained the camp, and made our second breakfast on the cold mutton from yesterday's feast, and cous-cousoo. The rejoicings, on account of the marriage, were still going on in front of the tent, behind which, at a little distance, ours was placed. Not wishing to offend any of their prejudices, we had hitherto kept aloof from this part of the camp, and we were as much surprised as pleased when an Arab, seeing two or three remaining in the tent, the others having gone out to shoot, came and invited us to witness the dancing and fantazia.

The brigadier of our spahis, who could speak



a little French, explained the proceedings. A curtain drawn across the door of the tent concealed the bride, who, closely veiled, sat within, surrounded by women. On the outside, between four and five hundred people were collected, and a clear space was kept in the middle for the dancers by two men with drawn swords, who vigorously applied, right and left, the flat of the blade to all who pressed too forward. On one side of the ring squatted the band, consisting of two men, with instruments like flageolets, and a drummer who occasionally accompanied the music with his voice. In the centre was a middle-aged woman, dressed in the usual dark blue cotton garments, but decked with all her ornaments—ear-rings, bracelets, and a necklace, to which sundry charms and amulets, teeth of wild beasts, verses of the Koran sewn up in little bags, and various other odds and ends, considered as protections from the evil eye, were suspended; a large circular brooch of silver or white metal (the same in form as those used by the Scotch Highlanders) confined the loose folds across her bosom; and a small looking-glass, set in

metal, dangled conveniently at the end of a string of sufficient length to allow of her admiring her charms in detail. Her face was uncovered, and her features were harsh and disagreeable, except the eyes, which were large and expressive, with that peculiar, lustrous appearance, given by the use of mineral paint. Her feet were hardly visible from the length of her dress, and her finger nails, together with the palms of the hands, were stained with henna.

As soon as we had taken our stand in the front row, the music, which had ceased for a few minutes, struck up, and the lady in the midst commenced her performances; inclining her head languishingly from side to side, she beat time with her feet, raising each foot alternately from the ground with a jerking action, as if she had been standing on a hot floor, at the same time twisting about her body, with a slow movement of the hands and arms. Several others succeeded her, and danced in the same style, with an equal want of grace. A powerful inducement to exert themselves was not wanting, for one of them more than once received

some tolerably severe blows, both from a stick and the flat of the sword; what the reason was I do not know, but suppose that either she was lazy or danced badly.

While the dancing was going on the spectators were not idle; armed with guns, pistols, and blunderbusses with enormous bell mouths, an irregular fire was kept up. Advancing a step or two into the circle, so as to show off before the whole party, an Arab would present his weapon at a friend opposite, throwing himself into a graceful attitude, then suddenly dropping the muzzle at the instant of pulling the trigger, the charge struck the ground close to the feet of the person aimed at. After each report the women set up a long continued shrill cry of *lu-lu, lu-lu*, and the musicians redoubled their efforts. The advance of one man is usually the signal for others to come forward at the same time, all anxious to surpass their friends and neighbours in dexterity and grace. Ten or a dozen men being crowded into a small space, sometimes not more than six paces wide, brandishing their arms, and, excited by the mimic combat, firing often at random, it is not to be wondered at if acci-



dents happen occasionally to the actors or bystanders.

Among the most remarkable, a fine athletic youth had particularly attracted my attention by the ease and gracefulness of his movements. Each time he came forward, after loading, I had marked his excitement increasing, and now carried away by it, he seemed to forget the peaceful nature of the meeting, for, levelling his gun deliberately at the Arab standing next one of the French officers and myself, he fired with the muzzle within a couple of feet of his body ; the man fell, rolled over and over, and lay as if dead. On examination of the wound, there was no fear to be entertained for his life, as he was hit near the hip, and a double fold of his bernous, which was burnt through, had deadened the force of the powder. It was nevertheless an ugly looking wound, as pieces of the woollen bernous and some grains of the coarse powder had been driven into the burnt flesh. The rest of the party did not care much about it, and the wounded man's wife, instead of looking after her husband, rushed up to the man who had shot him, and, assisted by some female friends, opened

upon him a torrent of abuse with such evident fluency of tongue and command of language, that, after endeavouring in vain to get in a word or two, he fairly turned tail and walked off.

I asked in the evening how the wounded man was, and they answered that it would not signify, he would be well in a week or so. Ten minutes afterwards he came himself limping to our tent, evidently much more distressed at the serious injury his bernous had received, than at his own hurt, and exhibiting the big holes burnt in his garment with a most woebegone expression of countenance.

The same rejoicings continued all the afternoon; and even when our numbers were increased by the return of the shooting party, no objections were made to our going to and fro as often as we pleased. It is the custom always to make a present to the musicians, which I understood was handed over to the bridegroom; so perhaps the five-franc piece given by each of us may have had some effect.

The actual ceremonies of an Arab marriage are very simple. The young man

having made his choice, the two fathers meet and settle what sum is to be paid for the bride; this important point arranged, a contract is drawn up and signed, the money paid, the bridegroom goes for his wife and brings her home. A divorce is a still easier matter, the husband gives his reason for desiring it (frequently a very trifling one), and the woman returns to her father, who however, is entitled to keep the sum he originally received at the time of the marriage.

Owing to their habits of life, the Arab women enjoy a greater degree of comparative liberty than falls to the lot of females of other Mahometan nations. Constantly employed in the severest domestic labour in the field, as well as at home, concealment of the person, as practised by the Moors and inhabitants of cities, is impossible in the douar, neither do they attempt it. The face of a Bedouen woman is seldom covered, except when she accompanies her husband into the vicinity of a town, or meets strangers unexpectedly. The men of the tribe are thus well acquainted with the features and dispositions of the women, and although<sup>11</sup>

considered only as slaves and beasts of burden, created to administer to the wants and pleasures of man, instances frequently occur where marriage is the result of a mutual attachment, engendered and fostered by the opportunities this freedom affords.

That this has always been the case, the numberless romances and songs, in which the Arabs delight, sufficiently prove. Their theme is always of love or war; heroic actions rewarded by youth and beauty; a lover bewailing the stony-heartedness of his mistress; the dangers and misfortunes passed through by some ill-starred pair before the goal of happiness is reached; the fierce flame of passion, the pangs of jealousy, and the bitterness of disappointment, painted with truth and spirit—are the subjects of their verse. Constancy is praised; high and honourable deeds are recited as worthy of imitation; and however slightly these sentiments may be felt, they are still sufficient occasionally to influence men gifted by nature with pure and generous feelings, which, lying dormant, require but a touch to awaken into life.

It is not, however, to be supposed that

even after a marriage of inclination and love on both sides, the social condition of the woman is improved. Her husband still considers her as placed a step lower than himself in the scale of creation, and made for his pleasure and convenience. But although such is her servile condition, the Arab woman is not unhappy ; accustomed from her infancy to see her mother, sisters, and friends toiling from morning till night, and assisting in their labours as soon as she is able, she feels she is filling her appointed lot, and quietly enjoys those few pleasures which fall to her share.

In the course of this afternoon Ben-Aouda voluntarily brought a case for the decision of the officer in charge of the Arab affairs for the Boghar district, which he might easily have settled on his own authority. A squabble had arisen in a neighbouring tribe under the Agha's jurisdiction, between the Kaïd and an Arab, concerning the amount of tribute to be paid by the latter. The Arab, dissatisfied with his Kaïd's decision, after a furious war of words, set out for the purpose of carrying his complaint before the Agha. The Kaïd endeavoured to stop him,



first by threats, and then by force ; a fight ensued, and in the *mêlée* the Arab succeeded in making his escape with a sabre wound across his right hand, that, severing the bone of his middle finger, left it hanging by a strip of skin. It was a case of no importance, and easily settled by ordering the Kaïd to pay a certain sum, both as a punishment, and to recompense the wounded man, who seemed quite satisfied with the sentence. I only mention this circumstance, trivial in itself, as an instance that proves the submission of the tribes of the Little Desert to the French authority ; any interference with the power of the chiefs in their own tribes having been always regarded with the greatest jealousy.

The Agha having heard from the spahis that we were English, expressed great curiosity to know how it happened that we were travelling with the French ? He evidently seemed to consider the English and French as natural enemies, and, I think, was not quite satisfied that we told the truth, when we repeated, more than once, that the two nations were friends ; as he recurred several times to the subject, placing his forefingers

side by side, and saying, "Ingleese, Franceese, Kiff-kiff"—an expressive gesture, in common use among the Arabs, implying that the persons or things compared are as alike as one finger is to the other, and was now used by Ben-Aouda to represent the existence of an intimate alliance between France and England. This feeling seemed to be universal among the Arab tribes both of Algeria and Tunis, and in the former, astonishment was frequently expressed at our travelling, and being on such friendly terms with, the French.

The music continued long after dark ; and in the middle of a poem, chanted in a loud voice, with a rather noisy accompaniment, and which had already lasted at least an hour, I fell asleep.

*March 19th.*—The weather, which the evening before appeared threatening, had fulfilled its promise of a change. During the night a cold piercing wind swept over the surface of the desert, and frequent showers, driven by the blast in eddies round the tent, found an easy entrance at the open side.

The morning was gloomy ; a dull, leaden

sky, with scudding clouds, and a bilious-looking sun, exhibited the douar in a different aspect from that of the previous day. The circle of dark, low tents, sombre in appearance at any time, seemed lower and darker than before; the flocks—cold, wet, and miserable, after the stormy night—stood cowering together; the horses—some of the most valuable protected by blankets—fared better, but their drooping heads, damp tangled manes, and draggled tails, told also of the discomforts of the night. The Arabs went quietly about their work, and the only beings in the camp who looked thoroughly comfortable were a brace of magnificent greyhounds belonging to Ben-Aouda, who, having shared his tent, were walking about, carefully clothed, to protect them from the ill effects of a raw wet morning. At half-past six we set out on our return to Boghar, taking leave of Ben-Aouda, who was profuse in his protestations of happiness at having had such a party as his guests.

Arab hospitality, of which in England we have such exaggerated notions, is not of that romantic kind which refuses to receive a recompense from those who can afford it.



The Agha would most certainly not have accepted, and probably would have been much offended, if we had offered him money as payment for the expense of entertaining our party, but he would have been equally disappointed if we had taken our departure without (as we were informed was the proper etiquette) giving a present to a servant, who, when the guests are gone, hands it over to his master. This custom refers more to foreign travellers than to hospitalities exercised one to another. On no account is a stranger, who claims food and shelter in the name of God, turned away from the douar. If of consequence, he is welcomed by the Kaïd or a wealthy member of the tribe, his horses fed, his baggage placed in a place of safety, and a sheep or lamb, killed in his honour, furnishes a special feast. If poor, he partakes of the family fare, and departs freely in the morning, expressing his thanks in some of the pious phrases so constantly on the lips of a Mahometan.

That this difference should be made is right. The Arab who shelters and shares his meal with a fellow-countryman, may shortly himself stand in need of similar

assistance, and perhaps require it from the hands of his quondam guest. With travellers like ourselves it is otherwise; their arrival deranges the whole tribe; they are not satisfied with a little, they expect to live on the fat of the land, and there does not exist a shadow of a chance that they will have it in their power to requite their hospitality at a future period. On the score of honesty alone they ought to pay for what they have received and be thankful.

Directing our course towards the morass, and skirting it for a mile and a half, we crossed the sluggish stream, which, thick with mud, crept through its centre, interrupting the breakfast of a large flock of flamingoes, which were busily employed feeding in the shallow water of an adjoining lake. For three hours we rode steadily over a monotonous succession of low barren hillocks of sand and gravel, intermixed with a scanty herbage that, brought into being by the winter's rain, struggled successfully with the sterile soil for a short existence. On nearing the Cheleeff the vegetation became more abundant, and a green carpet of turf, sprinkled with delicate little flowers of pale

blue, purple, and the liveliest crimson, covered the banks of the river.

Keeping by the river side, we passed numerous tracts of land under cultivation, with the young blades of corn just peeping above ground. Some of these patches were several acres in extent. The art of husbandry among the Arabs has not advanced beyond the earliest stage. Where necessary, the land is cleared of shrubs and bushes by burning, the surface is scratched by a plough of the most primitive description, the seed is thinly sown, and Nature is left to herself. If the crop is good, so much the better; if a failure, it is the will of God; and, trusting to Providence, the Arab follows exactly the same system next year. The fields are unenclosed, and when the properties of different tribes or families adjoin, the boundaries are marked by stones, laid down at the corners, which are never known to be moved, however far the proprietor may have wandered in the interval between sowing and the harvest.

After the harvest the grain is stored in "silos," deep pits dug in the ground, which, when full, are carefully covered over, so as to



exclude the air and preserve their contents for years. When once exposed to the action of the air the corn soon spoils, and therefore it is the usual practice, when a silo is opened, for the owner to distribute the grain among his neighbours, who repay him in kind when it becomes necessary to commence upon another store.

Since the earlier period of the French occupation, the capture of the silos and the destruction of the growing crops have been the principal, and, in many instances, the sole mode of punishing an insurgent tribe. Retiring with their families and flocks into the almost inaccessible valleys of the Atlas, they bid defiance to the troops, and thus securing all their moveable property in a place of safety, leave in their granaries and cultivated land the only vulnerable points. With the agricultural tribes, the fear of this chastisement, which many of them have felt more than once, acts as a powerful check. Deprived of a principal source of their subsistence for the year, their wives and little ones suffer from want; the trade with the Bedouens is destroyed, as they have lost their chief article

of commerce; and, after the vain struggle, they either yield to the terms of their conquerors, or abandon the land that their forefathers won with the sword, and retire into the depths of the desert, secure from the pursuit of their enemies.

We continued along the bank of the Cheleeff, diverging only from its course when obliged, by the deeply worn beds of the tributary streams, to seek a spot convenient for passing. Under Boghar, on the east bank of the river, our route lay through an Arab burying ground. Simple in their habits during life, their manner of interment partakes of the same character. On the summit of a neighbouring mount, a low wall of loose stones enclosed a spot of ground, from which several small flags were flying, to mark the sanctity of the place, and a narrow heap, with a rough stone at either end, pointed out the last resting-place of each desert child.

Ascending the hill, we reached the fort at two o'clock. The commandant expecting us back, was on the look out, and had seen our party approaching as we wound up the hill. In his quarters, turned into a mess-

room for the occasion, the fire, heaped with billets of pine and fragrant juniper, blazed merrily ; the cloth was laid in due order on a couple of tables the length of the room ; a whole regiment of bottles, some tall and thin, some short and fat, but all full, were placed at proper intervals, and from the half open door of the adjoining kitchen issued a most savoury odour, all uniting in assuring us of a breakfast as hearty and as warm as our welcome. A good breakfast when there is a good appetite, is a pleasant affair at any time ; but it is doubly so when, as in this case, it becomes a matter of rather more importance than the mere every day act of swallowing a certain quantity at a certain hour in the morning. We had had an eight hours ride and had tasted nothing since the previous evening but a handful of dry dates at the commencement of our journey.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Afternoon walk—A soldier's grave—Arab patients—Lepers—  
Leave Boghar—Government lands—"Les ravines de la  
peine"—Ancient cities—Sour Djouab and Sour Ghouzelan  
—Search for the douar—The Abides—Idiot boy—  
Scorpion-eating—Sect of the Aisaoua—Description of a  
commemorative fête of that sect held in Algiers.

LATE in the afternoon I strolled out alone, and wandered among the heights above the fort until driven homewards by the wind and rain, that had been for some time past increasing in violence. Crossing a hollow in the side of the mountain, just beneath the fort, my path led me near a solitary tree growing in the centre of a slight enclosure, within which, a few black crosses of rude workmanship, each raised at the head of a narrow mound, told that I stood by the home of the dead.

In France I loved the custom that decks with flowers the graves of relatives and friends, but never did it appeal so strongly to my feelings as in the little graveyard of Boghar. Placed by some comrades hand, on a cross marked only with initials and a date, hung a faded wreath of wild flowers. The rain was falling heavily, the wind whistled mournfully through the branches of the solitary tree, and each fresh blast that blew, seemed striving to tear the frail withered emblem of affection from the cross to which it clung. It told its own tale. Probably the favourite of his comrades as of his home, for it was the only grave so honoured; what tears may have been shed for him who rests beneath, by parents, kindred, friends, who scarce knowing the spot where he sleeps, know but too well he died far far away from those who loved him; no dear familiar faces gathered around his dying bed; no brother laid him in the grave; no sister hangs a garland of "immortelles" on his tomb, and fondly imagines she is communing in spirit with the dead as she breathes her prayer for his eternal happiness: he lies in a foreign land, and a few



wild flowers, twined by the rough hand of a brother soldier, are the sole offerings of the living to the dead.

The evening passed quickly away, the dinner cast the memory of the breakfast into the shade, and never was a merrier little party got together than the one which this night assembled around the punch-bowl (filled by the experienced hand of the commandant himself), with the Atlas between it and the world. We slept in our old quarters, the hospital.

The following morning, before we started, four Arab patients came to the medical officer for advice; two were common cases, of no interest, but the others, a mother and child, were lepers. I had never before had an opportunity of examining a case of leprosy; but after having witnessed these, I was better able to understand the necessity of the stringent laws of Holy Writ concerning lepers, which had hitherto seemed to me so disproportionate, in the excess of their severity towards the afflicted, with regard to the evils to be apprehended from the intercourse of the healthy with the diseased.

The mother, though suffering herself, was

scarcely an object of pity when seen by the side of her child, a poor little girl of six years of age. Red, dry-looking ulcers, and blotches of thickened skin, rough and scaly, spotted her body and limbs; her ears and neck were likewise affected, as also the lips and gums. A more pitiable object it is hardly possible to conceive; a cure was impossible, and all that could be done was to endeavour for a time to arrest the progress of the disease, and mitigate its symptoms. She submitted without a murmur to the doctor, whilst he washed her sores with a solution of caustic; it must have been painful, but she was inured to suffering, and when he applied the burning liquid to her ulcerated mouth, her little bosom heaved convulsively, an involuntary motion contracted her slender fingers, but she did not utter a sound; the tears gathered gradually in her large dark eyes, and as if ashamed of even this, she turned and hid her face in the folds of her mother's dress.

At half-past eight we mounted and rode down the hill, escorted thus far by all the officers of the garrison, from whom we parted more like old friends of as many

years acquaintance as it had been days, and often since have we recalled to mind our excursion into the Little Desert, and our visit to Boghar.

Taking a north-easterly direction, we crossed the Cheleeff for the last time, and keeping at the base of the mountains to our right, followed the course of a narrow valley, through which ran a tributary stream. On either side of the water the arable land is the property of the French government, who hold it by virtue of having succeeded to all the public property of the late Dey; but how he or his predecessors acquired it I could not discover. The Arabs pay a certain rent, in addition to the regular annual tax of ten per cent. Where the land was not cultivated, the ground was covered with a profusion of the wild artichoke, a plant of which the camel is excessively fond.

During the morning we passed over a part of the route, intersected by numerous ravines deep and narrow, extending from the steep sides of the mountains to the river, and sometimes not farther than a hundred yards apart. Their sides are steep and slippery after rain, which converts the soil

into greasy mud. Fortunately there had not been more than four-and-twenty hours wet weather, or difficult as we found the track, it might have been impassable. The French troops have named them "Les ravines de la peine," for when a column has to march by this route after rain, a battalion is sent on in advance, to render them passable by laying down trees and brushwood, which the next floods carry away.

At twelve o'clock, the clouds that had been hanging about the mountain tops, began to descend, and the rain commenced, and lasted till night. A copious supply of fresh water fell from above, but it was a long time before we could find any below, as the water in the river was so salt as to be unfit for use. At last, after a long search, we discovered a collection of huts of the most wretched description, where an equally wretched woman, a walking mass of rags and filth, shewed us a brook near at hand, the water of which, though brackish, was drinkable; and here we made our mid-day halt.

An hour's ride hence brought us to a point where a road branched off to the eastward, leading to the ruins of two Roman



towns, discovered some time ago by the French, and which had been visited by General Marey when moving with a force about the district. Captain Martenot taking a great interest in the subject, had drawn up and forwarded an account of the ruins to France. He describes the one nearest to Medeah, from which it is distant fourteen leagues, as the remains of a town that had been a military post of some consequence, as the fortifications testify ; but the hand of destruction had been so heavily laid upon it, that, except from the size of the hewn stones and the extent of its foundations, it was impossible to tell what temples or public buildings had stood within its walls. It is now known to the Arabs by the name of Sour Djouab, and was probably built in the earlier part of the third century. The other, twenty-five leagues from Medeah, and still more to the eastward, was also a fortified post ; it had been a place of more importance, and the ruins were of greater extent. Many curious tombs were found, with inscriptions tolerably perfect ; and, amongst others, the tomb of an Empress Julia. They are the ruins of the Roman city

of Colonia Auziensis ; and as the name of the Emperor Pertinax occurs, the city probably dates from the end of the second century. Its Arab name is Sour Ghouzelan. Leaving the regular track leading to Medeah, we struck in among the hills, to look for the douar of the tribe of the Abides. A thick fog was now added to the drizzling rain, and after a rough ride over rocks and stones, and through thickets of brushwood, we arrived at the place where the douar—was not. It was a clear case—the tribe had moved to another spot within the last few days ; but now came the question—“Where are they?”—as the prospect of spending the night “*al fresco*,” in such stormy weather, was, to say the least, not agreeable.

Evening was drawing nigh, and we had no time to spare for discussion ; so, setting forth again, we kept upon the higher part of the ridge, and sending two of the spahis different ways, proceeded ourselves in the direction the brigadier thought the most likely. We had gone forward for a mile and a half, when a mounted Arab fell in with us. One of the spahis had found the

douar, and men had been sent off to bring us in. The tents were snugly pitched in a wood of ilex, juniper and cork trees, occupying the face of a mountain at the head of a rich and well-watered valley.

It was five o'clock when we arrived at the douar. The Kaïd, Bel-Aïd, who had gone out himself in search of us, came in half an hour afterwards, mounted on a splendid mare—the finest animal, excepting General Marey's horse, I had as yet seen in Algeria. Being near the towns, we were served with coffee "*à l'Arabe*," prepared in the same way as in the East, with the addition of sugar; the use of which has become very general throughout Northern Africa.

While drinking our coffee, we observed a boy who, leaning with folded arms upon a stick, watched every motion that we made. The boy's countenance was disgustingly repulsive, and the vacant, yet cunning expression of his features, more those of a brute than of a human being, as well as the form of his mis-shapen head, stamped him as an idiot from his birth. A tattered bernous hung loosely on his shoulders, and, cold and wet as the evening was, he stood staring in at

the entrance of the tent, while the other Arabs, whom curiosity had at first attracted, gathered round the fire a few yards distant.

Knowing that the Arabs regard as saints, madmen, and those whose intellects are affected, I paid no more attention to him, and left the tent for a few minutes. When I returned, the boy was still there, fixed in the same attitude; and I was told that he had just made a display of his sanctity, by holding in his naked hand a live scorpion, and then eating it, without suffering in the least from its poisonous sting. As he was standing close to the tent, there could be no doubt but that he performed the disgusting feat of devouring the reptile, but I was rather incredulous as to the fact of the sting not having been removed.

We were discussing this point, when, guessing that he was the object of our conversation, he went away, and returned almost immediately with another scorpion in his hand. Taking a piece of stick, I examined it most closely in his uncovered hand, and perfectly satisfied myself that it had not been deprived of its sting, or injured in any way. The scorpion was of a tolerable size—



upwards of two inches long—quite lively, and able to inflict a very painful wound, the effects of which would be apparent almost instantly, and last for a considerable time. Standing over the boy, I watched him narrowly, to see that he did not pinch off the tail of the reptile, or play any trick; but, half raising his hand to his head, he put his mouth to his open palm, and I saw distinctly the scorpion writhing between his teeth as he took it up, and heard the crunching of its shelly covering, as he deliberately chewed, and then swallowed it. Neither his hands nor his mouth suffered in the slightest degree, and after a short interval he produced and ate another in the same way, which I also examined.

The boy, since the early period when the infirmity of his mind became apparent, had been brought up a member of the religious sect of the Aïsaoua, who claim the privilege, by the special gift of God to their founder, of being proof against the venom of reptiles, and the effects of fire. The present chief of the sect resides near Medeah, and his disciples are to be found scattered over the

whole of Northern Africa; they are held in a certain degree of reverence, but do not possess much influence. Captain Martenot gave us these details, and referred me, for further information on the subject, to the following account of a grand festival of the Aïsaoua, written by an officer, who was an eye-witness of the scenes he so graphically describes.

“In the court of a small Moorish house in the Rue de l’Empereur, Algiers, about sixty Arabs and Moors were assembled. Four standards—one red and yellow, and the other three red and green—were suspended from the columns of the court, over the heads of the chiefs of the sect. These were the standards of the Marabout, Mohammed-ben-Aïssa. In the middle, a long wax taper, placed in an old black chandelier, alone afforded light to the assembly, and cast its uncertain, glimmering rays, into the gloomy corners of the building. The upper gallery was filled with women, covered with their white veils, leaving visible only their black eyes, and their eyebrows stained with henna. Bou-Chama, by whose invitation I attended the festival, remained by my side, and

explained the origin of the religious sect to which he belonged, in nearly the following terms :—

“ ‘ Four or five hundred years ago a celebrated Marabout lived in the province of Oran. His name was Mohammed-ben-Aïssa, and having succeeded in gathering together a certain number of disciples, he wandered with them over the face of the land, sometimes in the Tell, and at other times plunging into the wilds of the Sahara. One day, during his wanderings, he lost his way in the desert. The provisions were exhausted, and his faithful followers, sinking from weakness, were on the point of perishing with hunger, when Ben-Aïssa, stretching his hands towards heaven, implored the mercy of the God of Mohammed. ‘ Lord,’ cried he, ‘ thou alone art able to save us. Take pity upon us, and cause whatsoever we may touch to change for us into wholesome food.’ At these words, seized with sudden inspiration, his disciples gathered stones, serpents, scorpions, &c., satisfied their hunger, and suffered no harm. We,’ continued Bou-Chama, ‘ followers of this illustrious Marabout, have inherited the same privilege; and it is in

commemoration of this miracle, and to perpetuate it, that we have now assembled together. By our prayers we obtain the cure of the sick, and draw down the mercies of heaven upon our newly-born children.' After these words Bou-Chama left me and joined his brethren; the rites were commencing.

"The prescribed ablutions having been performed, the Aïsaoua standing in meditative postures, recited eight times the Mussulman profession of faith—'I bear witness that there is none other god than God, and that Mohammed is his Prophet.' In their voices there was something grave and solemn, which was most impressive. The Mokaddam, or chief of the sect, then chanted a prayer for all Mussulmen, and called down upon them the benedictions of the Prophet. At the end of each prayer the Mokaddam stopped, and the Aïsaoua, lifting up their voices in turn, asked health for one, or the blessing of maternity for another, and the chorus then taking it up, addressed a prayer to God, in accordance with the favour demanded. Incense was every now and then thrown on a brazier of live coals, and the



chorus repeated in a loud voice, '*Es-salah ! Es-salah !*' They then all seated themselves in a circle, leaving a vacant space in the centre of the court. The Mokaddam and his chief assistants took their places opposite to me, and at their side a dozen Aïsaoua arranged themselves, each armed with an enormous tambourine, which they beat in cadence, while the chorus vociferated a song in honour of Ben-Aïssa. There was in these songs an undefinable spirit of frantic rage, which produced in me a certain impression of terror. I saw some of these fanatics roll enormous serpents in the hollow of their tambourines, while livid adders reared their hideous heads from the hoods of their ber-nous, and, dropping to the floor, glided over the marble as cold as themselves. In spite of the horror which I felt at this sight, curiosity got the better of my disgust, and I remained.

"I must confess, however, that my heart beat violently ; the dim obscurity, the infernal music, the women, shrouded in their white veils, appearing like phantoms risen from the grave, all prepared my imagination for the horrid spectacle of a festival of the Aïsaoua.

“At the sound of this barbarous music, one of the party rushed into the circle with a frightful cry and extended arms, as if possessed by the evil one. He made the round several times, roaring hoarsely and savagely, then, as if compelled by a supernatural power, he began to dance to the sound of the *ambourines* and drums. He was then clothed in a white *bernous*, and his “*shasheah*” (red woollen cap) being taken off, the long hair left on the top of an Arab's head, fell over his shoulders. He then commenced his ‘*zeekr*.’ The *zeekr* is a species of religious dance, which consists in jerking the head from right to left, so that it touches the shoulders alternately. The whole body of the *Aïsaoua* was in motion, his eyes soon became red and bloodshot, and the veins of his neck blue and distended; nevertheless he continued his terrific dance.

“On a sudden two others rose up, and, with savage yells, joined the first. The three, excited by each other, redoubled their stampings and the motion of their heads, working themselves up into a state of frenzy impossible to describe. Now calling for red hot iron, small shovels, the broad part the

size of the hand, with long iron handles, were given to them. Seizing each one, these enthusiasts, placing one knee on the ground, applied their hands, and even tongues, to the red hot metal. One of them, more madly excited than his companions, placed the brightest portion of the instrument between his teeth, and held it in that position for upwards of thirty seconds.

“Let not the reader think that I exaggerate; I witnessed all that I relate; and, in order to impress the scene stronger upon my memory, the performer of this last act placed himself directly opposite to me with a lighted taper in his hand. It is impossible for me to give a reason for what I saw, but I cannot disbelieve it; I smelt the stench of the burnt flesh, and when I afterwards touched their hands and feet, I found only a fresh and uninjured skin. The sight of one old man, nearly sixty-five years of age, gave me great pain; he grasped the red hot iron, and placing it on his leg, allowed it to remain there until a whitish smoke arose, which filled the whole house with its poisonous odour.

“These dances lasted, in this manner, for

the space of an hour. Notwithstanding the noise produced by the songs and the tambourines, the painful rattle in the throats of these mad fanatics could be distinguished amidst the din; at last, exhausted by fatigue, they fell backwards, one after the other, and lay senseless and motionless on the ground; the songs ceased, and nothing broke the solemn silence but the sound of their heavy breathings. A man, whose task it was to attend the half-dead wretches, now advanced, and placing his foot successively on the pit of their stomachs, pressed their sides strongly, kneaded their limbs, and caused them to revive.

“The dance recommenced, four fresh Aïsaoua rushed into the circle, and were soon in the same state of frenzy as their predecessors, striking their heads with the red hot shovels, and stamping upon them with their naked feet. Then, in their delirium, imagining that they were transformed into camels and lions, they uttered the cries of the animals they represented, and feigned a combat between them; their mouths foamed and their eyes sparkled with rage. The Mokaddam now presented to them a leaf of



cactus, of which the thorns, an inch in length and sharp as a needle, made me tremble. At this sight the combat ceased, the Aïsaoua threw themselves upon the cactus, they tore and ground it between their teeth, making the air resound with a hoarse noise resembling the horrid cries of an enraged camel. At this moment the women, placed in the upper gallery, raised their dismal cry of *lu-lu, lu-lu, lu-lu*.

“ This frightful scene was only the prelude to all the horrors I was about to witness. Towards eleven o’clock the songs ceased, and coffee and couscousoo were brought in, of which I found it impossible to partake. The repast over, they recited a prayer before re-commencing their dance ; and, on the musicians beginning to strike their enormous tambourines, seven or eight of the disciples rose, howling dreadfully, and dressed in white like their predecessors, began to perform the *zeekr*.

“ My acquaintance, Bou-Chama, was of this party, and, taking a bundle of small wax tapers, he placed first his hand, and then his arm, face and neck, in the flames. His features, when thus lit up, as they appeared

from one moment to another through the varying flames, had quite a demoniacal appearance.

“In the meantime, a Negro had amused himself by placing live coals in his mouth, which, as he breathed, burnt brightly, and sent forth a thousand sparks. Without having been there, it is impossible to realize the terrific sight I had before my eyes. Opposite me, within two paces, was the Negro, whose glowing mouth displayed itself in a black and hideous face, his head, with its single lock of crisp woolly hair, vibrating rapidly from side to side, and around me the hellish music, the convulsive stampings, and the frightful cries of the dancers.

“The Negro was now in a state of the most furious excitement. Swallowing the still burning contents of his mouth, he seized a large scorpion, full of life and venom; placing it on his arm, he irritated the reptile in every possible manner, pinching it, putting it near the taper, and burning one of its claws. The enraged animal darted his sting into the offered hand, the Negro smiled, and, raising the scorpion to his mouth, I heard it crack between his teeth,

and, as he swallowed it, I turned my head aside in horror. The reader, perhaps, supposes that the scorpion was deprived of his sting, but I had ocular demonstration to the contrary; nay, more, I might have brought one from the Boudjareeah myself and given it with my own hand, as many have done who have been admitted to these 'Hadrah.'

"A yatagan was now brought, the point wrapped in a handkerchief, and two men held it horizontally about three feet from the ground. On seeing this, a man rose from his seat and commenced his *zeekr*, then, uncovering his breast, he sprang with all his weight on the naked blade; it seemed as if his body would have been cut in two by such a blow. He remained, however, with his bare breast on the sharp edge of the sabre, balancing himself with his feet, in an horizontal position, and tranquilly continuing his *zeekr*.

"Meanwhile the four other *Aïsaoua* continued their furious dance, beating their heads with the iron shovels brought to a red heat. To these, three others soon joined themselves, grasping in each hand a living

adder, with which they struck their bodies. As they danced, the serpents wound themselves about their limbs, hissing horribly. Then seizing them, some placed them in their mouths, so as only to permit the head of the reptile to escape; one even forced the adder to bite his tongue, and, leaving it thus suspended, continued his dance. Others squeezed them between their teeth, to increase their rage, and the irritated reptiles, in their desperate struggles to escape, twined around their necks, and, hissing, reared themselves above the heads of their tormentors.

“Excited by the spectacle before their eyes, and by the increasing noise of the music, the Aïsaoua rose in a body and rushed to take a part in the dance.

“Then commenced a scene which words cannot describe. Twenty Aïsaoua, clothed in white bernous, with dishevelled hair and haggard eyes, mad with excitement and fanaticism, bathed in sweat, and grasping serpents in their hands, stamping, dancing, and convulsively shaking their heads, each starting vein swollen and distended with blood. The women, like phantoms, assisting



in this scene, lit only by a pale and solitary taper, uttered in a piercing tone their shrill cries of *lu-lu, lu-lu, lu-lu*; this, mixed with strange songs, hoarse sounds, and the hollow rattle in the throat of each Aïsaoua, as he fell exhausted and senseless, formed altogether a scene so totally repulsive to human nature, that it seemed in truth a feast of hell.

“Such dreadful exertions could not, however, last long; by degrees the number of dancers diminished, as one after another they sank under the fatigue, and their panting bodies strewed the marble pavement of the court.

“The feast of the Aïsaoua was over.”

## CHAPTER IX.

The tribe of the Abides—Their connexion with the Government—Snow-storm—Ben Chekao—Travelling in the Atlas—Return to Medeah—General Marey—The lion and the plaid—A Moorish bath—Leave Medeah—Exorbitant bill—Copper mines—Their produce—Ancient workings—Crosses—The canteen—Walk over the Col de Mouzaïa—The Cheeffa—Bleedah and return to Algiers.

THE Abides, in whose douar we were passing the night, differ only from the other tribes, in the relation in which they stand with the French Government. It was part of the policy of the late rulers of Algeria, to exempt certain tribes in each district from the payment of the annual tribute, upon the condition that the disposable force of these tribes should always be in readiness to serve, when desired. This practice has been continued by the French

authorities ; and the Abides, one of these tribes under the old régime, retain, on the same condition as formerly, their privilege of exemption, and also receive pay when employed, at the rate of fifteen francs a month. They form a species of hereditary militia, and in case of robberies, dissensions between tribes, or partial outbreaks, have in many instances, been found extremely useful.

The night was bitterly cold, but fortunately for us, the tent was new, and of a better material than usual, with a fourth side, which closed us in all round. We rose in the morning at day-break, cold and stiff, notwithstanding the comfortable tent, for the rain, during the night, had turned to snow, which had fallen to the depth of two inches, whilst the thermometer stood at one degree above the freezing point.

A glorious fire, and hot coffee, soon brought us round, and at half-past six we faced the snow, which was still falling, and set out for Medeah. In a short time we regained the road that we had left the previous evening, and kept it for three hours through a country, that even in tolerable

weather would have been rendered beautiful by its deep wooded glens and running streams, wild valleys, rocks and mountains dotted with evergreen oaks and cork trees, whose rugged bark, furrowed with seams and gaping cracks, showed less the effects of a green old age, than the swelling increase of the sturdy trunk within.

We had, however, enough to do to take care of ourselves, without wasting our energies in fancying how beautiful the scenery would be, if the weather were fine. It continued snowing hard, and the high wind causing it to drift, the track, in many places, was covered, hiding the loose stones, and holes filled with mud, through which our horses scrambled at every step.

At last we arrived at Ben Chekao's house (for a house it was, being built of stones and lime, with a tiled roof), but instead of every thing being prepared for us, we found ourselves unexpected guests. The messenger ordered on in the morning from the douar, to give him notice of our probable arrival, not having performed his errand, Ben Chekao rushed off immediately to get breakfast ready, much annoyed to find that he would not be



able to entertain us in a proper manner, he being devoted to the French interest, in hopes of getting an appointment, and, being a wealthy man, he especially prides himself upon his cuisine.

His household certainly exerted themselves, for in the course of an hour, couscous and beghir, with milk and coffee, were brought in. The couscous was rather different from any that we had previously tasted of, inasmuch as it appeared to have been manufactured with clean hands, all we had hitherto met with having a most suspicious looking brown tint, which it was impossible to help referring to the state of the hands that had formed the grains of which it was composed.

At noon we again mounted, and traversed a worse road in worse weather. The horses slipped and tumbled about; and at one spot where a steep slippery clay bank had to be crossed diagonally, we all fell except Captain Martenot and one of the Spahis. There was no helping ourselves; on the left was the rocky wall of the mountain side, which it would have been difficult to climb on foot, and on the right the narrow bank

sloped to the verge of a deep precipice. We went at it one at a time, and as our horses all fell, we were in the same plight, and could not laugh at each other; but it was decidedly satisfactory when the brigadier, so vain of himself, his horse, and his horsemanship, rolled in the greasy mud. As we drew nearer to Medeah, the snow ceased, and was replaced by heavy rain. The last steep hill was with difficulty ascended by our wearied animals; and at half-past three we rode through the gate of Medeah.

Having been invited, before we started for the desert, to dine with the General on the day of our return, we were, at six o'clock, seated round his table, with nothing to remind us that we were in Africa, or that there was an Arab within a thousand miles.

After dinner a visit was paid to Sultan, who received us most graciously, until I happened, as the night was cold and wet, to put on a Scotch shepherd's plaid. He grew uneasy, and began to shew signs of anger without any apparent cause; it was some time before it was discovered that he objected to the plaid, and the moment I put it aside he was content. The only reason that could

be assigned for his dislike, was that he took the loose ends that hung down, for a bernous, it being a curious fact, that, from the first day he was brought into Medeah, a cub of a few weeks old, he has had the greatest aversion to the sight of an Arab or his bernous. Now, as it is impossible that he can have been ill-treated by one since he has belonged to General Marey, we must suppose, that for two years, he has remembered some ill-usage received in his cubhood at the hands of the Arabs who found him.

During the evening General Marey gave us an interesting account of the march of an expeditionary column under his command, with which he penetrated last year as far south as Laghouat, in latitude 34 degrees north, passing through a part of the Sahara Desert hitherto unvisited by Europeans. As I propose to devote a chapter to a short outline of this expedition, I will pass over the subject for the present.

Intending to set out early next morning, we took our leave of the General, with many thanks for the extreme kindness he had shewn us; a kindness that will not soon be forgotten either by my companions or

myself. Adjourning to Captain Martenot's room for a cup of tea, Captain Du Pin of the Etat-major, permitted us to look over his portfolio, containing sketches in the most masterly style, of African scenery, and the incidents of a soldier's life in Algeria; including also, a series of views, illustrating the country through which the expedition above mentioned marched.

It was now proposed that we should take a Moorish bath; and as there could be no doubt of the fact, that we wanted a good scrubbing after our journey, we went to the bath at ten o'clock. Passing through a narrow passage, we entered a room with two sides occupied by a sloping divan seven feet wide, and raised a couple of feet from the floor. Giving our watches, rings, and money to the owner of the bath, who sat at the doorway, we took off our clothes, replaced them with a voluminous wrapper of white cotton, and thrusting our toes into leather loops, tacked to a pair of wooden soles, shuffled along, led by an attendant, to a small apartment, full of steam and tolerably warm, adjoining the bath-room. Here we changed our drapery for dark cotton



handkerchiefs fastened round the waist like kilts, and passed on into a vaulted stone chamber, lit by a solitary lamp hanging from the roof, whose sickly light, struggling with the clouds of steam and the darkness, just rendered visible the strange forms of the bath attendants, naked, like ourselves, to the waist, with a single lock of dark hair, dripping with moisture, dangling from each uncovered shaven head.

The pavement was flooded with hot water, and at first the heat was so oppressive I could hardly breathe; but the feeling went off after having been seated a few minutes on a stone bench in the centre of the bath. We were now all laid out in a row on the pavement, each stretched on a blue cloth, with a rolled-up towel under the head, and an operator for each person. My attendant was a musical character, for when he commenced shampooing, he accompanied his labours with a song, marking the chorus at the end of each verse by a punch of extra force. Being well soaked and softened, I was now scrubbed with a camel's-hair glove until I felt as if I had no skin at all. I then had my legs and arms pulled, my head screwed

round with a jerk, was then doubled up like a boot-jack by his kneeling on my shoulders, my arms were brought behind me and while his knee was forced into the hollow of my back, two or three dexterous twists put in motion each rib and vertebra; he then finished by endeavouring to crack, separately, every toe and finger. A large bowl of soap-suds was now brought, and, with a handful of the soft fibres of the aloe, he lathered me from head to foot; a plentiful supply of hot water was now poured over me, and, re-conducted into the interior, I was enveloped in clean white warm linen, a long soft towel was wrapped round my head as a turban; and, lastly, taken into the outer-room, I was laid upon the divan, with three or four sheets over all.

To those who have not tried it, all this may not seem very delightful, but the feeling of lightness and elasticity given to a fatigued and stiffened body, by a Moorish bath cannot be imagined without being felt. One by one, as they came clean and polished from the hands of the operators, our party re-assembled, "all decked in virgin white." cool lemonade, hot coffee, and long pipes

were discussed as we lay half dozing in a state of delicious languor. It was too much trouble, at the time, to analyze my own feelings, but I remember the predominant idea was, that I felt exceedingly comfortable, without knowing why or wherefore, and I never felt less inclined to move than I did when, at midnight, it was necessary to rise and return to our hotel.

Next morning, March 22nd, the day commenced anything but favourably. Out of doors it was blowing a gale of wind and snowing hard, and in doors the storm raged with equal fury, the landlord and landlady insisting we should pay their unconscionable demands, and we holding out as stoutly for an abatement of charges most unreasonable; if the amount of the bill had been only half as much again as, or even double what we ought to have paid, we should not have grumbled. Of course it ended as these affairs always do—in our having to pay—and, I am sorry to add that, into the bargain, I lost the very last thing a traveller should lose, and that was—my temper. I must, however, in justice, take this opportunity of mentioning, that this was the only instance throughout



Algeria and Tunis where we met with even an attempt at extortion.

At ten o'clock we set out, and Captain Martenot, kind and attentive to the last, saw us off. To him we were indebted for making an interesting journey a most agreeable one, and we parted with a sincere wish to meet again.

As we were desirous of seeing both routes between Bleedah and Medeah, we had arranged to return over the Atlas, by the Col de Mouzaïa, celebrated not only for its great natural beauty, but as the scene of several desperate struggles between the French and Arabs. Two hours and a half, plunging up to our horses knees in mud and melting snow, brought us to a canteen, built a third of the way up the steep ascent of the Djebel Mouzaïa, and close to some copper mines now working, which I was anxious to visit. My companions, not being so much interested in mineralogy as myself, preferred going on at once to Bleedah, whilst I remained here for the rest of the day.

The superintendent of the mines kindly devoted the greater part of the afternoon to taking me over the works in progress.



At the period of the capture of Algiers it was well known to the French that certain districts of the Atlas, in the vicinity of Medeah, were rich in minerals, and that formerly copper had been worked successfully, although to no great extent, at the earlier period of the Turkish rule. The present mines were, however, discovered by the engineer officers, who, when surveying the country, found numerous fragments of ore in the beds of the mountain torrents, which led to further search, and thus to the discovery of the veins now working, as well as of the deserted galleries of the ancient mine. Specimens were sent to France to be analyzed; the ore was found to be rich, and a company was formed, who commenced their operations a year ago; but, owing to the difficulty of procuring labour, and the impediments incidental to a novel enterprise in this country, it is only for the last three months that the works have been properly carried on.

The galleries, twenty-two in number, are driven into the side of a ravine, with a south-westerly exposure. As yet none of them have attained any great length, the

longest being only 125 feet, and, being driven horizontally into the mountain, but little labour is requisite to extract the ore, which lies in a matrix of argil, the general direction of the veins being east and west. The ore is broken with hammers into small pieces, and sorted according to quality, all fragments containing a large proportion of earthy matter being rejected, as not of sufficient value to pay the expense of transport and smelting. The picked ore is then carried by mules and asses to Bleedah, from thence to Algiers, where it is shipped to France to be smelted. The ore is remarkably rich, some specimens possessing as much as 34 per cent. of copper, and the average yield of the ore imported into France is about 20 per cent. A hundred and sixty men are employed, a large proportion of whom are soldiers, permitted by the authorities to labour in the mines, and who receive their extra pay from the company.

Having visited these works, the superintendent now rode with me to the ancient mine, rather more than a mile distant, and on the other side of a steep ravine that separated two spurs of the mountain. It is held

by the same company, who have purchased from the tribes the exclusive right to all the minerals in an extensive district, for a small sum, and have also had the purchase confirmed to them by the French Government. A small colony of forty Germans now carry on the works, but hitherto the produce has not been equal to that of the other mines.

The account current throughout the country is, that it was worked by the Spaniards or English, and as a proof, they show a rude cross of a large size, hewn in the rock, near a spring in the neighbourhood, and two smaller ones cut in the mine itself. It is therefore probable that the miners were Christian slaves; which is further borne out by the appearance of the works, and the traces of blasting. The borings are remarkable for their size, being three inches nine-tenths in diameter.

The southern slope of the mountain seems to be one immense mass of minerals; antimony is abundantly disseminated with the copper; lead has been found in small quantities, and traces of silver discovered, but the ore that exists in the greatest abundance is iron, which, from the absence



of coal, is useless ; neither is there in this part of the Atlas sufficient wood to supply charcoal for a furnace at a reasonable cost.

The afternoon had now cleared up, and from the entrance of the old gallery I had a magnificent view : above me rose the snow-clad summit of the Djebel Mouzaïa, 5200 feet above the level of the sea ; at my feet lay the wild ravine ; and around, mountain beyond mountain stretched away into the distance, until their bold outlines becoming gradually less and less distinct, melted into the faint forms of the clouds floating lightly on the horizon.

Returning to the canteen—a wooden shed, with a rough exterior, but comfortable within—I was snugly seated by the fireside, when the snow began again to fall, and between eight and nine in the evening, the one room being cleared of customers, the tables were turned into beds, the fire replenished with wood, and honoured, as a stranger, with a pair of clean sheets, I slept soundly, between a half-drunken miner and a travelling pedlar, who occupied the tables to my right and left. The night was stormy, and by the morning the snow had

drifted round the canteen so deep, that a path had to be cut, before we could leave the house. As it still continued snowing, and the road was completely covered, I was obliged to wait until chance brought me a guide. Fortune kindly sent one in the guise of a French officer, who had come thus far from Medeah to meet his wife and child, whom he expected from Bleedah in the afternoon, but on seeing the state of the pass, left his horse, and set out on foot with me at eight o'clock. After an hour and a half of toilsome climbing up to the knees in snow, and every now and then wandering from the path, we reached the summit of the Col, where we overtook an old Arab, mounted on a wretched donkey, struggling, with the assistance of his two sons, through a snow-drift four feet deep, that had formed in a narrow pass between two rocks, on the crest of the mountain. After some delay, their filial efforts were crowned with success, and the old man and his ass were safe on the other side. With some difficulty I managed to drag my horse through, and we followed the Arabs, as guides, down the pass. Drawing nearer the plain, the snow was

succeeded by heavy rain, and on arriving at the banks of the Cheeffa we found we were just in time, as the flood from the rain and melting snow was coming down so rapidly, that in the course of an hour or two the river would be impassable, and the boat having been injured the previous week, was useless. Not knowing the ford, I was obliged to call in the assistance of two Arabs, who, each taking hold of my horse, which was very unwilling to face the stream, pulled him across in safety, and then returned for the French officer, who had by this time determined to go on to Bleedah. At half-past three I arrived at Bleedah, and rejoined my companions, wet to the skin, from the rain, and from wading the little mountain streams, having dragged my horse, which submitted very unwillingly to be led, for seven hours and a half, after me, in detestable weather, over an equally detestable mountain road. Next morning, the 24th of March, we left Bleedah at six o'clock, and, owing to the state of the roads after the rain, did not arrive at Algiers until noon, where we took possession of our old quarters in the Hotel de la Regence.

## CHAPTER X.

A general view of the country between the 34th and 37th degrees of latitude—The climates—Trees—Truffles—Animals of the Desert—Winds from the sea—Season for military operations—Accumulations of sand: their effects on the rivers and springs—Divisions of the country south of the Atlas—Heights above the level of the sea—Salt lakes—The Sahara and its inhabitants—Aristocracy of the Desert—Arab tribes—The relations of the Sahara and the Tell—Distribution of domesticated animals—The Mehary—Its use in military operations—Population—The Arab of the Tell, and the Arab of the Sahara.

REMAINING for some days in Algiers, awaiting the departure of the Government steamer for Bóna, which sails every ten days, I take advantage of our halt, to give a general view of the country lying between the Mediterranean and the Great Sahara Desert, and an account of the French expedition to Laghouat in 1844, taken from a



clever and interesting pamphlet, drawn up by General Marey, and printed for private circulation.

The regions to the southward of Algiers, laying between the 34th and 37th degrees of latitude, possess six climates, perfectly distinct from each other. The plain of the Meteedjah, which is low, warm, and damp. The chain of the Atlas, twenty-five leagues in width, rising 11,000 feet above the level of the sea, and whose climate, extending as far as Boghar, resembles that of the South of France. The Little Desert—an elevated district, but scantily watered. The mountainous country of the Djebel Ammour, and the Djebel Sahary, from four to five thousand feet in height, and twenty-five leagues in width. Further south comes the northern part of the basin of the Mzi—a series of abrupt elevations, with an arid soil and a burning sky. And lastly, at Laghouat is the Great Desert, where you find neither mountains nor water.

From the sea-coast to within four leagues south of Boghar, grain is cultivated, without irrigation. After that, water must be artificially supplied, except in some elevated or



damp situations. It is probable that the system of irrigation introduced by the Arabs into Spain, is derived from the conquerors having employed there the same methods of cultivation that they had been forced by necessity to follow, in tilling the sandy soil of Africa.

In the Meteedjah grow the aloe, palm, cactus, and orange, which do not flourish in the Atlas, the trees of which are those of the south of France—such as evergreen oaks, elms, cork trees, pines, cypresses, &c. The trees of the Desert are the lentisci, the karouba, the juniper—which attains the height of thirty feet—and, in damp places, the tamarisk. In the chains of the Djebel Ammour and Djebel Sahary the trees are confined to the lentisci, cypresses, pines, and, in the higher parts of the mountains, the ilex. In the gardens about the *Ksars* the fruit trees of Europe and Africa are seen flourishing side by side. In the Meteedjah the palms are unproductive, and are not to be met with again until to the south of the Djebel Ammour, where they yield most abundantly, in a country where wheat and barley are scarce and dear, and the date is

the principal article of food. Here nature puts on a peculiar aspect; the vegetable productions of the soil, the minerals, the birds, the reptiles, and the insects, all follow one type—the type of Central Africa.

In the Great and Little Deserts the higher parts consist of little else than rock, while in many of the less elevated portions a thick bed of vegetable earth, of an excellent quality, is found. In the months of May and June the Little Desert is covered with herbs, affording an abundant pasturage, superior to what is then found on the Djebel Ammour. In the Great Desert there is no grass, except in certain moist places. At the end of June the grass dries up, and the flocks then eat it as hay. In November fall the first rains, and verdure again returns.

Throughout the desert truffles are found in immense quantities, whitish in colour, and without any great flavour; they are, nevertheless, a *recherché* and wholesome addition to the table, and are even an object of commerce, when preserved by drying.

The lion and the panther, which are tolerably common in the wooded mountains of the Atlas, are not to be found in either

the Great or Little Desert. On leaving Taguine the ostrich begins to appear, as well as a large species of antelope, called by the Arabs "louache." In the Great Desert the horned viper, a serpent of a very dangerous species, is numerous; and there are also lizards, nearly three feet long, with a flat, denticulated tail. The largest serpents are rarely more than seven feet and a half in length.

When the sea-breeze, having passed over the Meteedjah, reaches the Atlas, its temperature becomes reduced, and it deposits its humidity in the form of clouds, rain, or snow; then, carried on over the Little Desert, the clouds are dispersed by the increased heat of the soil, only to be again re-formed on the ranges of the Djebel Ammour, and finally disappear as they pass over the burning plains of the Sahara. Thus, often in the Little Desert the weather will be beautiful, while the Atlas and Djebel Ammour, to the north and south, are both enveloped in clouds, and when General Marey's expedition crossed the ridge of the Djebel Ammour in the midst of a violent storm, the sky was serene and clear, and the

weather lovely, in the deserts on either side of the mountains. As by these mountains a large portion of the moisture carried by the winds is intercepted, comparatively but a small share reaches the elevated plains beyond (except during the winter, when the rain falls in torrents), but being almost entirely dependent for water on what comes from the heavens, and that source being closed for the greater part of the year, the soil is burnt up, vegetation cannot exist, and these plains become a desert. In the Atlas and the Djebel Ammour snow falls every winter, and lies on the ground for several weeks. It has been seen on the Djebel Sahary in the month of May. But little snow falls in the Meteedjah or the deserts, and, when it does, it melts almost immediately.

The best seasons for carrying on military operations in the south are the winter and spring, because then the heats have not commenced, and there is also a supply of grass and water. But it must be taken into consideration that the Great Desert is at times subject to sudden inundations, which are very destructive in a country so flat and so extensive, that an army might be

destroyed by them. A few days before the French expeditionary column arrived at Laghouat, several Arab douars had been swept away in this manner.

Throughout the desert the sand is of the same nature, resembling a reddish yellow sand-stone reduced to powder. The beds of sand commence near Taguine; they become larger at the Ksars, Djebel Sahary, and Djebel Ammour, and beyond they are still more extensive. On elevated places, or on the face of steep acclivities, there is little sand; but in the low grounds, in the ravines, in the beds of rivers, and against obstacles that have a southerly exposure, it accumulates rapidly. Near Laghouat some precipitous mountains are situated, against whose southern sides are piled immense sand-banks, whilst on the others there are none. These sands are most probably not the debris of the soil in the immediate neighbourhood, but have been gradually deposited here by the sand-laden winds of ages.

This reddish, yellow sand, which covers the whole country, imparts its own peculiar tint to the landscape, and even to the sky,

near the horizon, when it is blowing hard from the interior. It penetrates everywhere, and is the cause of many diseases of the eye; but the most serious consequences ensue from its collecting in the hollows and in the beds of rivers, where not only what is blown into them remains, but much of what lay on the higher ground during the summer is carried, by the winter's rain, into the water-courses. The streams continue to flow as long as they are able to carry away the sand, which they can only do where the river runs over a hard rocky bed, with but a thin covering of loose soil, for, when the stream arrives at a deep mass of sand, which it has assisted to form, it disappears. Then if, when lower down, the bed of the river rises nearer the surface by reason of the layer of sand becoming thinner, the river re-appears. Thus, the springs of Aoueta and of Assafia do not pass the limits of the gardens, at those places, more than 150 yards, when they lose themselves in the sand. The Oued Mzi, above Tejmout, is a beautiful stream, with a copious supply of good water, which spreads itself over an extensive bed of sand; after flowing a short



distance, the river disappears, returns to the surface at Recheg, vanishes again to reappear above Laghouat, and then finally disappears for ever. On this account, at Ksir and Aïrane water is only to be procured from wells dug to the depth of twelve or fourteen feet. The course of the river underground is marked at times by the fall of the water during the inundations, and by the dampness of the soil, which gives birth to trees and herbs. The quicksands of the Oued Mzi are very dangerous ; horsemen, who, through ignorance of the localities, attempt to cross at any but the safe spot, being frequently swallowed up. When the Oued Mzi overflows, it leaves, on retiring, a rich slime, which renders fertile for a time the banks of the stream : last year (1844) the river had risen three times, and the additional strength of the herbage, from this cause, contributed greatly to the good condition of the horses during the expedition to Laghouat.

The country to the south of the Atlas may be viewed generally, as consisting of six large basins. 1st, That of the Cheleeff, bounded on the north by the Atlas, on the

west by the elevated plateaux that extend from Tiaret to the Djebel Ammour; on the south by the Djebel Ammour and the chain of Meksem, and to the east by the line of separation of the water between Meksem and the Atlas. This district, fifty leagues in length, and as many in breadth, is drained by the Cheleeff, which finds an outlet at Boghar. 2nd, That to the west of Tiaret, where the Meena, and the other rivers traversing the Tell of Oran, take their rise. 3rd, To the north of that ridge, and to the west of a line from Tiaret to the Djebel Ammour is the basin of the Chotts (the salt lakes) of the desert of Oran. 4th, To the east of the line of the Meksem, to the north of the Djebel Sahary, and to the south of the Atlas, another basin is formed, whose waters fall into the salt lake of Bousâda. 5th, Between the Meksem and the Djebel Sahary, is the salt lake of Zarhz, in the territory of the Ouled Naïl tribe; and, 6th, to the south of the Djebel Ammour and the Djebel Sahary is the basin of the Oued Mzi, whose waters run into a salt lake in the regency of Tunis.

The plateaux to the east of the Little



Desert, are of a considerable elevation, and slope gradually, without an abrupt declivity, towards Boghar. The high plateaux to the south and to the west of the Great Desert, are of the same elevation, and descend with a gentle slope as far as the Oued Mzi, and with that river to Biscara, and thence to the salt lake Melguig.

The heights above the level of the sea, may, in round numbers, be estimated as follow :

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| The plain of the Meteedjah . . . . .  | 500 feet. |
| Lower part of the Little Desert. . . . .  | 2000 „    |
| Higher plateaux of ditto . . . . .  | 2600 „    |
| In the Great Desert, the lower part near the river<br>Mzi, where it falls into the lake Melguig, is<br>the same level as the sea. |           |
| Near Laghouat . . . . .   | 2000 „    |
| More elevated plateaux in the Great Desert . . . . .  | 2800 „    |
| The lake of Zarhz . . . . .   | 2300 „    |

In the Little Desert are several detached groups of hills, but the Great Desert, as far as it has been visited in this direction is perfectly flat, and the Arabs state, that for many days' march to the south, slightly undulating plains only are to be found. From the summits of the Djebel Ammour and the mountains near Laghouat, nothing is to be

seen towards the south but an unbroken horizon, as from a vessel at sea.

It must be admitted that a general change has taken place in Northern and Central Africa; the basins are formed by the undulations of the ground, and the marine shells that are found, prove that the sea once covered this portion of the earth. Where the basins opened towards the present coast, the waters entered the sea; but, in the basins enclosed on every side, evaporation would take place, and the water would be by degrees concentrated in the lower part, where the salt it contained would be deposited. The rain-water collects in the low ground, and from thence feeds the lakes, which, full in winter, are generally almost dry during the summer. It is to be remarked, that in all these inland lakes the water is very strongly impregnated with salt, which may be accounted for thus: taking the basin of Zarhz alone, it has been computed that the seawater it contained, held in solution salt that, if precipitated in a solid mass, would cover a base twenty-five leagues square, with a bed of salt 650 feet thick. A mountain, one immense mass of sea-salt, which is near the

lake of Zarhz, is a square league at the base, and upwards of 600 feet in height, and is probably the result of a displacement posterior to the evaporation of the sea-water, and the deposit of the salt in the lower part of the basin.

The more elevated portions of the desert are little more than naked rocks, deprived, by the heavy rains of winter, of their earth; thus not only is the sand collected in the lower situations, but the vegetable earth also. In these places the surface of the soil remains dry, the streams run under ground, and to procure water, which is often of a bad quality, it is necessary to reach the solid bed of the basin.

The Sahara is far from implying, like our word desert, an uninhabitable region: for, as in all other countries, there are different descriptions of land, varying from good to very bad; for instance, in the Alps, there are elevated portions where corn does not grow, and which are used only for grazing: in the eyes of the Arabs these would be the Sahara. The soil of the Little Desert, if in Europe, would be well cultivated; and even in the Great Desert, the lower parts support

a numerous population. Where there are no springs, it is sufficient if water can be procured from wells, for fertility is the result of irrigation ; the gardens produce an abundant supply of fruits and vegetables, and the palm is cultivated on a grand scale. Owing to the shallow covering of earth, the herbage on the higher plains is weak and scanty, which obliges the tribes who live too far to the south to enable them to remove in the summer to the Tell, to lay up during the spring a supply of hay for the summer. In the Sahara, provision must be made for the unproductive season, the summer, in the same manner that, in the north, we guard against the scarcity of the winter.

One of the characteristic features of the desert is the absence of beaten tracks ; so that it is only by the outline of the country, or by observations of the stars, that the desired route can be followed. The Arabs are accustomed to travel immense distances to arrange trifling affairs. Single travellers generally make their journeys during the night, both to escape robbers, and to avoid the taxes that many chiefs lay upon those who pass through their territory. The douars

are usually placed in retired spots, for safety, and also to reduce the expense of exercising hospitality, which in many places is very great; during the day they are to be discovered by the rising smoke, and at night the fires may be seen by mounting the hillocks. Almost all the tribes are robbers when occasion offers; and when thus employed, the Arabs are distinguished for their intelligence, daring, and powers of abstinence, especially with regard to enduring thirst, as, among themselves it is considered disgraceful to drink much, and it is a subject of pride to be able to pass several days without water. They are excessively fond of the chase; and, besides greyhounds, they have admirably trained hawks. As guides they are incomparable, finding the douars they wish to reach, with facility, and tracking the enemy, or robbers, with precision, by means of a thousand trifling indications which would escape the unpractised eye of a European.

In the Tell, the tribes, although dwelling in tents, have but little to fear from sudden attacks, as it is difficult for a party to pass through unperceived; in the Little Desert



the uncertainty of the relations between the tribes commences, and in the Great Desert it is at its height. The immense expanse of the Sahara gives rise to a constant anticipation of danger, which is often changed into reality; hence arises the necessity of obtaining early intelligence of passing events, and news travel through the desert with extraordinary rapidity. In the event of crimes being committed, neighbouring tribes often join and mutually assist each other in pursuing the delinquents; without some arrangement of this kind, there would be nothing but murders and robberies, which, even as it is, are very numerous.

Each Arab reckons on his douar, his tribe, its chiefs, and its allies for protection; on this account it is desirable that the chiefs should be able men, possessed of power, and of ancient and noble families, whose alliances give additional strength. The aristocracy of the desert are thus held in higher esteem, and are more honoured than the noblest families in the Tell, where the protection of the chiefs is considered, from the district lying so near the seat of government, as but of little value.

The tribes of the Little Desert cultivate the soil near the borders of the Tell, and on the banks of rivers; and also breed large flocks and herds, which find on their territories, in the spring, an ample supply of grass, which in the winter also is tolerably abundant, and during the summer and autumn sufficient. In the summer they assemble near the rivers or springs that never fail, such as "the Fountain of Taguine," which signifies "the fountain of the powerful," and owes its name to the great scarcity of water in its environs, which renders the possession of this spot an object of contention among the tribes; so that it is "the powerful" alone who can retain it. The tribes of the Tell pass the winter in the Little Desert, to avoid the piercing cold of the mountains, and to husband their own pasturage. In the ranges of the Djebel Ammour and Djebel Sahary, the inhabitants and their cattle are able to pass the summer in some of the more watered parts of their mountains. As for the Great Desert, cultivation being only practicable in the oases, they feed their flocks of sheep and camels on the thin pastures of the Sahara. During the winter and spring the animals

remain several months without drinking, the grass at those seasons containing sufficient moisture; the men and horses drink sheep and camels' milk, or water brought from a distance upon the backs of the latter animals. The Saharian tribes are those who carry on the trade of the interior, and whose wanderings have been described in a previous chapter.

No life can be more adventurous than that of these Arabs. For instance, the Larbas, who, torn by intestine feuds, are divided into factions, and regularly every year are at war with each other, have to traverse by force the territories of their enemies; to defend themselves against the pirates of the desert, the robber tribes; they unite with their allies against mutual enemies, and, when opportunity offers, they attack and plunder those weaker than themselves. They must at all times be well acquainted with the political and commercial condition of their own and the surrounding countries, for their safety depends upon one, and their profits upon the other.

The month of June is often a season when attacks are made upon the Arabs of the



Tell by these tribes; for in the cultivated spots of the Sahara, the Ksars, &c., the harvest, such as it is, is over by the end of May, and trade not leading them northwards until the end of July, leaves the interval unoccupied. In these attacks the object is the crops, which, though on the ground, are just ripe; and the tribes, either preparing for, or working at their harvest, being all employed on their own affairs, there is but little to fear from those tribes they leave unmolested; they must, however, always reckon upon being able to pass the remainder of the summer in some other part of the Tell; this is the usual practice of the tribes who live to the south-west of Oran, and who, purchasing their grain, and trading with Morocco, are indifferent as to what relations they bear towards the Arabs of the Tell.

From the Mediterranean to the centre of the Sahara, the domesticated animals are distributed according to the nature of the soil and climate. The Kabiles, living in houses in the mountains, possess large flocks of goats and sheep, and a few horned cattle, mules, asses, not many horses, and no camels. The nomade Arabs of the Tell, who never

wander far from their silos, have plenty of cattle, horses, mules, and a few camels. The tribes of the Little Desert, who never quit the rich pastures comprised between the Atlas and the Djebel Ammour, scarcely ever going further from the centre of their territories than fifteen or twenty leagues, have great numbers of sheep, camels, horses, and a few mules. Oxen are only to be found in the Atlas, in the Djebel Ammour, and some other mountain chains, and never beyond the Mzi. In the north of the Great Desert are sheep, camels, horses, but no mules. The tribes in the south, from the great scarcity of water and herbage, have few sheep, but possess immense flocks of camels; and the horse is replaced by the "mehary." The mehary is not in itself a distinct species, but stands in the same relation towards the ordinary camel, that a thoroughbred racer does to a cart-horse. The hump is without fat, and very small, and the whole shape of the mehary exhibits an appearance of strength and spirit. Its habitual pace is a trot, which it is able to sustain for the whole day at about the same speed as the ordinary trot of a horse; but

over rough or slippery ground the rate of speed is much reduced. The saddle is placed upon the withers, in front of the hump, and the legs of the rider, when mounted, rest upon the animal's neck; when razzias are made, two men are mounted on each. Their food consists of certain herbs, and the kernels of dates; and the Arabs allege that the meharies can travel fifty, and even eighty leagues in twenty-four hours.

The horses of the Sahara often drink milk; very few ever get barley; they are sometimes fed upon dates, and in cases where there is no other food, cooked meat has been given to them. Those that are kept exclusively upon dates and milk are in capital working condition, and will bear immense fatigue. The breed of the Oulad Sidi Chikh, south-west from the Djebel Ammour, is the finest in the desert.

The military expeditions, or razzias, are made by the inhabitants of the Ksars, with infantry; by the northern tribes of the desert, with horsemen; and by those to the south, with their force mounted on meharies. From fifteen to twenty leagues is considered as a day's march for the former, from thirty

to forty-five for the cavalry, and from fifty to eighty for the latter ; so that a six days' expedition, going and returning, would be fifty leagues for the infantry, a hundred for the cavalry, and a hundred and eighty for the meharies. There is one disadvantage attending the use of the meharies, which is, that as they cannot increase their pace they are soon overtaken by horsemen, even with a start of seven or eight leagues in their favour.

From the sea to the river Mzi the country would support a large population ; and that it has once done so, is proved by the numerous ruins which are found as far south as the river Heumar ; in the Djebel Sahary and the Djebel Ammour there are at the present day more villages than in that part of the Atlas inhabited by the Arabs.

Finally, the Tell is looked upon by the Arabs of the desert not only as the source from which they derive their foreign luxuries, and as the outlet for their superfluous produce, but as a place of safety and refuge in the event of a dry, unfruitful season. In the eyes of the Bedouen the Tell is the land of wealth and security, where life passes

easily and all the delights of the city are enjoyed, but where the inhabitants have greatly degenerated. He looks upon the Arab of the Tell as too nearly resembling the dwellers in towns and the Kabiles, whom he holds in the most sovereign contempt, and considers that the free, noble, and honourable life is that of the desert, where wealth, and life itself, depends upon a chance, and each prospers according to his talents, good fortune, and bravery.

## CHAPTER XI.

General Marey's expedition to Laghouat—Arrives at the Oued-el-Heumar—The advance of the French foretold by a Marabout 130 years ago—Extracts from the prophecies—Return of the expedition.

THE following narrative of the expedition to Laghouat is abridged from that written by General Marey himself:—

“During the months of March and April, 1844, an expeditionary column, 1500 men strong had traversed the Little Desert, and penetrated into the Djebel Sahary as far as the Ksar Zackar; it was then one hundred and two leagues to the south of Algiers, twenty-five from Laghouat, and fifteen from the Great Desert. It acted directly upon the Ouled Nail, and indirectly upon the country of Laghouat. The Ouled Nail submitted, and a satisfactory relation had been established with them as tributaries to our

Government. The Larbas Cheragas, who had come from Tittery into the Tell in 1843, sent their three Kaïds, who brought their tribute-horses, and received anew their benious of investiture. Laghouat and the confederation of the Ksars sent a deputation, which also brought their tribute-horses, and whose chief, Yaya-Ben-Salem, a man of consequence, brother to the chief of Laghouat, made a very important proposal—namely, that Ahmed-Ben-Salem should be made Kalifa, and that he should govern Laghouat, the five neighbouring Ksars—the Larbas, the Aradhlias, and even the Beni Mezab, in the name of France. This project appearing to me highly interesting, and worthy of being put into execution, I sent Yaya to Algiers with my report. The Governor-General approving of the proposal, it was necessary to visit these places in order to organize this completely new country, and, if necessary, to force it into submission. This was the aim of our expedition.

“ On the 12th of April I received orders to prepare the column, and having to march ninety-six leagues beyond Medeah, forty days’ provisions were requisite. Between

Boghar and Taguine we were on our own territory, and it was necessary to establish at the latter point a fortified depôt, not only to secure our communications, but in order to lessen our encumbrances and the expenses of our convoy, by leaving there our invalids, and the provisions for the use of the column on its return. The troops arrived at Medeah, from Bleedah and Bouffarick, on the 24th of April. Mules were taken up to carry the provisions from Medeah to Boghar, from whence they were to be conveyed by camels, and the cavalry of the tribes were ordered to join us between Boghar and Taguine. I took only 140 spahis and 400 Arab horsemen, partly to lessen the convoy, which, nevertheless, was very large, and proved a great impediment, and partly because we wished to act, not so much on the tribes, as on the Ksars.

“ The Ksars are placed at the extreme edge of the Great Desert, and are, in fact, its ports, being depôts in which the tribes deposit their merchandise, as they could neither easily nor safely carry it with them from place to place. Each tribe has its own. Some are placed under the protection of Marabouts, as Aïn Madhi, Cheref, Sidi



Bousid, &c.; others are defended by the tribes themselves; and lastly, others, like Laghouat, are governed by chiefs of their own. The Ksars and the tribes are thus equally necessary to each other, and both are likewise, to a certain degree, dependant upon the chiefs of the Tell, without whose permission they could neither carry on commerce, nor procure their supplies of grain. Hence the proverb of the desert, 'He is our father who is the master of our mother, and our mother is the Tell.' The necessary requisites for the establishment of a Ksar, are as follows:—An elevated situation, not only strong as a military position, but safe from inundations; to be near a spring, or an inexhaustible river, or otherwise to possess pits of drinkable water, which must also afford a supply for irrigating the fields and gardens; an enclosure, strong enough to resist all probable attacks; and a soil sufficiently compact to allow of silos being easily excavated.

“The buildings are usually of coarse bricks, baked in the sun; some few have the lower parts of the walls of masonry. The enceinte has usually flanking projections, and the

gardens are surrounded by walls, with battlemented towers. The vegetation is superb; the palm trees grow from sixty to a hundred feet in height, the pear and almond trees resemble our large oaks. The vegetables are excellent; and millet is much cultivated. The harvest is about the end of May.

“ Our preparations were considerably impeded by the constant and heavy rain, which continued to fall until we reached Laghouat; but there was this difference—we were much harassed by it, as far as the Narhouassel, two marches beyond Boghar; but from thence it was most useful, as it preserved the grass and produced cool—indeed, at times, excessively cold weather, instead of oppressive heat. I had received directions to provide the column with mules, but on computing the allowance of barley for each mule at the rate of only three kilogrammes per diem, I found that, for a march of forty days, each mule would only be able to carry his own rations; I therefore proposed, and obtained leave, to use camels in their place. As the expedition was to act in the desert, it was obvious that the camel—the natural beast of burden of the districts through which we

were to pass—was preferable for many reasons, two of which were, that their price is only the fourth part of that of mules, and that any number could be procured with facility, while mules are becoming scarce. I had 277 camels, the property of Government; and the requisite number was made up by the tribes furnishing them, on my requisition, at the daily rate of three francs and a half for each camel.

“On the 1st of May, the Cheleeff being fordable, the troops, which had been ready on the 27th of April, left Medeah. They had scarcely crossed the river, when, on the 3rd, a furious tempest burst forth: a large proportion of our provisions being damaged, was obliged to be replaced, and I had 20,000 rations of rice-bread brought in haste from Medeah. At length, on the 10th, the last camels having crossed the Cheleeff, we started, and reached Taguine on the 14th. There we found the remains of a Ksar, which had been built above the marshes thirty years ago; but the situation having been found unhealthy, it had been abandoned. Two days were employed in placing this Ksar in a state of defence; four bastions were thrown

up, and a double line of entrenchments—the outer one being formed of dry stones, and that within of cases of biscuit and sacks of barley. I left there an ample supply of wood cut three leagues from the spot, 150 leathern bottles full of water; ammunition, and an hospital wagon, with 150 men, under the command of Captain Motet, of the Engineers. The tribes of the Rahman, the Ouled Chaïb, and the Bou Aïch, placed their numerous douars in the neighbourhood; the sick horses and mules were left in charge of the Bou Aïch; 257 useless camels were disbanded, as, after leaving Taguine, the only camels that could be returned to their owners were those of the Ouled Naïl, who accompanied us on our march southward.

“ We left Taguine on the 17th, when our column consisted of 2800 men, and 1700 animals—namely, 1700 infantry soldiers, 140 regular cavalry, two mountain guns with eighty rounds for each, thirty artillerymen with wall pieces, the train, &c.;—in all, 2100 regular soldiers, 400 horsemen of the Goum, 300 Arabs attached to the different services, together with 1400 beasts of burden. Each man was furnished with



sixty rounds of ammunition, and carried his rations for six days; we also had with us, on the camels, 72,000 musket cartridges, and provisions for twenty-one days.

“From the 18th to the 21st—on which day we arrived at Tejmout—we were in the range of the Djebel Ammour. At Tejmout I found the Kalifa and the principal chiefs assembled. Tedjini, the chief of Aïn Madhi, did not come, but he sent several of the principal people, a horse, and a submissive letter. Tejmout is a well-situated Ksar, with beautiful gardens; it was formed by emigrants from Laghouat, who had been driven from thence by civil wars; but most of the houses were destroyed or injured by the war two years ago, and it will require a long period of tranquillity to restore them to their former state. Its force consists of 120 muskets, and everything else in proportion.

“On the 22d, during our halt, I sent Lieut.-Colonel St. Arnaud with twelve officers, some Chasseurs, 200 horsemen of the Goum, the Kalifa, and the Larbas, to Aïn Madhi, to examine and take a plan of the town, and so to confirm, by an ostensible act, the sub-

mission of Tedjini. The party was well received, examined everything most minutely, and returned the same day. Lieut.-Colonel St. Arnaud acted and spoke in Aïn Madhi as master, and conducted this delicate and important mission with much tact. There was, however, at one moment great alarm in the town, for, after they had admitted the twelve officers, and an equal number of Chasseurs and horsemen, the Lieut.-Colonel sent off a dispatch to me, stating the submissive reception he had met with; and it appears that, seeing the courier depart, the inhabitants suspected treachery. The chiefs, however, did not share their suspicions. It is certain that, if the officers and Chasseurs already within the town had wished to admit the Arab horsemen stationed on the outside, not the slightest resistance could have been made. In fact, Tedjini had at that moment placed himself completely in our power, under the guarantee of our honour only, and this treason, which must have succeeded, would have been quite according to Arab warfare, but was far from our thoughts. Had it been necessary to act against Tedjini, we should have attacked the place at once;

and I make no doubt, from the excellence of our troops, that we should have succeeded, although, probably, with considerable loss.

“The Kalifa being at Aïn Madhi, imposed a tax of 2,000 boudjoux, (3720 francs) which he ordered to be paid the next day. Aïn Madhi is a very ancient town; it is built on a hillock, at the foot of which flows an inexhaustible brook, which irrigates the gardens; it belongs entirely to the family of Tedjini, who do not allow any strangers to establish themselves there; they have made it habitually the seat of their religious worship, and for the last forty years have held it as a very strong military post.

“In Africa there are many religious orders resembling those which existed in France prior to the Revolution, but differing from them in certain respects: the proselytes, instead of being assembled in monasteries, are scattered over the country. They are subjected to certain practices of devotion; they sometimes make donations to their order, and they bring a certain portion of their revenue annually to their chief, relying upon his support and advice for their good in this world, and upon his protection



in the next. Almost every tribe in the desert and Tell has its own marabout, whom they call their Lord, whose servants they consider themselves, and whose hand is respectfully kissed by the most elevated chiefs. The order of the Tedjini extends very far into Algeria, Tunis, Morocco, and the interior of Africa. In almost all the towns of the locality Tedjini has, or had before 1830, schools, where his disciples were instructed, in order that they might represent him and his doctrines. The authority for the management of the order is transmitted from father to son, or, failing a son, through the collateral branches, as in reigning families. In many of the religious orders which exist in the Tell this is the case also, but the Government sanctions the nomination of the new chief, whilst at Ain Madhi the chief of the order generally dispenses with this formality.

“Tedjini possesses great power and influence, as many of the tribes follow the rule of his order; he is also very wealthy, and his adherents being devoted to him, make him large annual presents. His family also is of a very high religious nobility, standing



among the seven or eight most holy and most considerable families of marabouts in the north of Africa. In addition to this, his numerous followers are perpetually increasing his influence, and his town contains a large military force when compared with the means of attack of the surrounding country. Formerly Aïn Madhi was only defended by walls made of bricks baked in the sun, like the neighbouring little Ksars ; but in the year 1790, Tedjini, the father of the present chief of the order, brought an architect from Tunis, who, at a great expense, built good brick-and-mortar walls, with battlements, &c., forty feet high, and six and a half thick. These walls having been destroyed during the war with Abd-el-Kader, Tedjini is now occupied in rebuilding them ; they have been in progress for the last four years, and will probably be finished this year, or the next, at latest. The family of Tedjini paid a small annual tax to the Turkish Government, but considered itself as belonging actually to the empire of Morocco.

“ On the 23d we marched to Aouéta, a small town, possessing not more than fifty

muskets ; like the others, it has suffered much in the civil wars. It is built upon a height commanding a ravine, through which runs a spring, which irrigates the gardens, and is then lost almost immediately in the sand : it is annexed to Laghouat, and is its advanced post to the west. Being seven leagues to the south-west of Tejmout, and six to the south of Aïn Madhi, its situation would have enabled me to act against the latter town, had it been necessary, as well as to keep in order the Ksar Tégéroura, and the Ouled Yacoub, who are sometimes refractory.

“ Whilst I was at Aouéta, Tedjini sent to me the amount of his tax in articles of clothing. These I returned untouched ; and he then wrote to me in grateful and submissive terms, sending, at the same time, six quintals of dates, which reached me at Laghouat, and were transferred to the Goum. Aouéta paid its contribution. The Ouled Yacoub fled six days’ march to the west. Tégéroura, to whose inhabitants I had not written, owing to its not belonging to the circle of the Kalifa, sent a tribute-horse ;

but the deputation not arriving at Aouéta till after our departure from thence, returned home again.

“The treatment of Tedjini had required much consideration, owing to the following circumstances. He has always shewn a disinclination to exertion, appearing only to wish to enjoy in peace and safety the advantages of his private position, as a rich, pious, and much venerated chief. He is very useful to the country, as, from his known probity, and the strength of his town, the depôts committed to his care are considered perfectly safe; he also uses his influence in preventing wars between the tribes, he receives all travellers in a most hospitable manner, and has even established an hospital for the sick. To be well thought of in the country, it was necessary to treat Tedjini with respect, for his opinions are adopted by the people in general, who confide in his judgment and sanctity, and who have frequently sacrificed themselves for him, and other members of his family. As Tedjini gave out, that the ill-treatment he received from Abd-el-Kader was on our

account, it was politic to demonstrate that he, the enemy of that Emir, was the subject and the friend of the Christians.

“Tedjini has one peculiarity; he has never consented to receive any strange chief; he has never presented himself before a Bey, nor before Abd-el-Kader. In Morocco he never appeared before the emperor or his superior agents, nor before the sovereigns of Tunis, Tripoli, or Egypt, in his way to Mecca. The general opinion was, that we were coming to take possession of Aïn Madhi, and Tedjini was much alarmed; he was evidently disposed to fly, for he had made no preparations to defend himself, having with him only the eighty armed men belonging to the town. He well knew that he had only been able to resist Abd-el-Kader, through the support afforded him by Ahmet ben Salem, and therefore showed himself quite submissive to the Kalifa and to us. In this dilemma several plans presented themselves. If we marched on Aïn Madhi, the probability was, that Tedjini would fly, which would have a very bad effect; if, instead of flying, he had closed his gates, either an assault or a system of

intimidation would have become necessary ; these might have failed, which would have discouraged our column at the very outset, and, even in the case of military success, our political situation in the country would have been seriously injured ; on the other hand, to rest contented with the submission of Tedjini, as manifested only by his letter, his tribute horse, and the words of his envoys, without obtaining a more decided proof of it, both in the eyes of the French and the natives, and above all, without ascertaining the strength of Aïn Madhi, seemed a very incomplete result. There was a middle course, which appeared the most advisable ; this was instead of going straight with the column on Aïn Madhi and insisting on Tedjini's appearing before me, to send officers to reconnoitre the place, and to demonstrate our authority before the native chiefs, to fix a tax to be paid immediately, and to proceed to Aöueta, which is not far from Aïn Madhi. If the orders given to Tedjini, with this view, were executed with a good grace, then to treat him well and free him from all fear of our approach ; if not, to march on Aïn Madhi,

having a perfect knowledge of the localities. This plan, which was highly approved of by the Kalifa, succeeded completely, as I have already narrated, and it became clear to all, that, on the one hand, Tedjini was not only submissive and obedient, but even grateful and devoted to the French authority; but, on the other hand, that we were his masters, able to injure him more than Abd-el-Kader, but testifying towards him nothing but great consideration and good-will. Thus both the French and the native interests were satisfied.

“On the 24th we bivouacked at Recheg, upon the river Mzi, which flows past Tejmout and Laghouat; we arrived before this last-named Ksar on the 25th, and halted there during the next two days. Laghouat, where we were very well received, is an ancient town belonging formerly to Morocco, but, after passing under several rulers, was, at the time of our conquest, under the protection of the Algerine government, to which it paid a very small tax. It is considered the capital of the desert, and is built on the north and west sides of a mountain, to the east of which runs the river Mzi. The for-



tifications, consisting of two strong towers, built on the culminating points of the crest of the mountains, are united by the walls. The town is divided into eighteen districts ; each district takes the water for one day, subdividing it among the different families ; the taxes are imposed according to the quantity of water taken by each. There are no baths in the Ksar, which contains only four meanly built mosques and one fondouk.

“ A small stream, bringing water from the Mzi, irrigates the magnificent gardens, which form to the north and south of the town splendid forests, many thousand metres in length. The palms are large, and in great numbers ; they produce excellent dates, date honey, and palm wine ; the fibres of the leaves furnish materials for various kinds of matting, and for the large umbrella-shaped hats worn in the desert ; and the wood is used for building. The fig, peach, plum, apricot, vine, almond, mulberry, and banana grow there in abundance, together with many kinds of vegetables. Although these gardens form the principal riches of Laghouat, they are at the same time her weak

points; as the inhabitants would never be able to make up their minds to see them destroyed, and the impossibility of defending them against such a column as ours, may account for the favourable reception we met with. I was accompanied, when I entered the town, by the standard and music belonging to the Kalifa, and from five to six hundred foot soldiers came out to meet us, discharging muskets in our honour. The principal inhabitants of the town presented themselves before me, and daily sent dates, and forty dishes of couscoosoo, which were made over to the Goum. We established a market, as we had done at Tejmout, and installed, during the day, a police guard in the town, where numbers of our officers and soldiers repaired by turns in small parties, by special permission, making purchases of provisions, the manufactures of the desert, ostrich feathers, &c. The arrangements for the future payment of an annual tribute were made without difficulty. The population of Laghouat is estimated at from 5000 to 6000, and its force consists of from 500 to 600 infantry, and about ten horsemen.

“ The 28th we halted at the Ksar Assafia,



bivouacking at Reg, near the Ksar Ksir-el-Aïrane, six leagues to the south-east of Laghouat; and on the 29th, we halted at Ksir-el-Aïrane itself; at both these towns we were well received. Assafia is a very ancient Ksar; it was formerly considerable, and has long made war against Laghouat. About a hundred years ago, so runs the local tradition, the people of Laghouat promised a heavy sum to the marabout El-Hadji-Aïssa, if he would obtain from heaven the destruction of Assafia; he consented, and shortly afterwards an extraordinary hail-storm completely destroyed the town, it being, like its neighbours, built merely of earthen bricks dried in the sun. The people of Laghouat having obtained their aim, refused the stipulated payment to El-Hadji-Aïssa, who then predicted to them, as a curse, that they should themselves be perpetually torn in pieces by intestine divisions. The Assafians went to entreat the marabout's protection, and he advised them to rebuild their town in a higher situation, which they did. One half of this new town was completely destroyed during the war, two years ago, and the other half was much

injured, so that we first arrive at a small Ksar, then at the ruins of one nearly the same size, and finally we find the remains of the original Ksar, which was much more extensive, surrounded by beautiful, large, well watered gardens and corn fields. The spring as usual is speedily lost in the sand.

“Ksir-al-Airane was built forty years ago, by order of Ahmet Ben-Salem. A part of the Rahman tribe, who reside near the Tell, separating themselves from the rest of the Neja, in consequence of one of those disagreements so common among the nomadic tribes, formed the base of the population, under chiefs from Laghouat. There are no fountains, merely pits of very indifferent water; which, however, is only used during the droughts, as at other times water is procured from the pools of the river Mzi, which, after leaving this place, is called Djeddi. The object in establishing this Ksar, was to have an advanced post to the east, in order to control those tribes who are frequently obliged to encamp near the pools, and also to furnish them with magazines at a high rent. This Ksar is still extensive; although nearly a third of the buildings were destroyed in

the war of last year, they can arm about 150 men ; the houses have large courts full of silos, but the gardens are inconsiderable, owing to the want of running water.

“ In this march from Taguine, we had continued along the edge of the territory of the Ouled Naïl, and the Kalifa took advantage of the effect produced by our column, to collect the taxes from this tribe ; we were then two days' march from the Ksars Messad and Demmed, neither of which I had visited, and one from Boudrine. Here were beautiful fields of corn, sown by a part of the Yaya-Ben-Salem tribe, who, always living in the Great Desert, have never submitted either to the Turks or Abd-el-Kader.

“ On the 30th we reached Boudrine ; here the Ksars Messad and Demmed sent their tribute horses, while the chief of the Larbas, and the agha of the Ouled Naïl answered for the ultimate submission of the tribe to which the corn belonged, they being still encamped near Laghouat ; and they also guaranteed an additional payment of 1000 boudjoux, as a tribute upon the corn-fields, they having, of course, been left uninjured.

“ Reconnoitring the country for about a league and a half to the south of Boudrine, we saw at two leagues’ distance, the confluence of the two rivers, the El-Heumar and the Djeddi; the Djeddi is the continuation of the Mzi, it runs underground, and can only be traced by the growth of a few trees. The El-Heumar rises in the west, and, during the rains, is an impetuous torrent, carrying all before it, but dries up rapidly. There is a spring near the place where the El-Heumar falls into the Djeddi, and near it, on a height, I could plainly distinguish the ruins of a large town, which appears to have been of Roman origin; and the Arab chiefs told me, that some inscriptions in our style of writing are still to be found there.

“ El-Hadji-Aïssa, a marabout of Laghouat, predicted, 130 years ago, that the French would take Algiers, come to Laghouat, and penetrate as far as the river El-Heumar. Our arrival in the country, and march as far as Boudrine having been foretold, has added much to the already great reputation of the prophet. A descendant of El-Hadji-Aïssa repeated these predictions to me, and

the four following passages, literally translated, are extracted from the volume containing them.

“Prepare for the Christians, their morning and evening repast,

For, by sin I swear, they come to the Oued-el-Heumar.

Joy shines in the eyes of their women,

Their soldiers light their fires upon our rocks,

They then return to their magnificent city, and to their splendid palaces.

The verdant Tunis will see, on her side, the children of Spain.  
Arise, and behold through a cloud of dust, a thousand glittering standards.

It is the Christians sallying from Algiers, who advance towards the Oued-el-Heumar.

You who hear my words, speak not,

We are not near seeing these things ;

But I have seen them. I see them with my two eyes.

Algiers becomes the most magnificent of cities ;

She rejects the faithful from her bosom,

And is filled with Christians, who come in crowds across the sea.

Woe to the magnificent city ! Algiers is filled with Christians.  
The mosques of the faithful are abandoned for the temples of the infidels.

The sleep of the Turk has been troubled ;

He has been vanquished. His reign is past.

He has filled full the measure of his injustice.

The power of God is irresistible.

Algiers was defended by brave warriors,

And the power of the Turks seemed to augment with their crimes.

They were addicted to every vice ;

They were drunkards, and slaves to every passion ;  
 They forgot their faith, and neglected all their duties.  
 A Christian army, protected by God, advances towards us ;  
 Every where victorious, nothing can stop them for an instant.  
 The Turks are humbled. Their crimes have precipitated  
     them into the abyss ;  
 Their wives even, are abandoned, and left defenceless ;  
 The power of the Christians will have no limits.  
 Algiers, the proud Algiers, for nearly three centuries has been  
     subjected to the tyranny of the Turks ;  
 Their power reached over the space of a year's travel ;  
 Their renown was spread abroad through the empires beyond  
     the sea :  
 Algiers, placing her trust in God, hoped for a better lot.

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“ All that will happen is written ;  
 When thou seest the day of judgment approach, fear not.  
 Ask not what God will do. Such knowledge is not for thee.  
 The angel Tedzel will come, doubt it not,  
 Having overleaped the immensity of space, he will come ;  
 All ears will hear his words ;  
 The sun will rise where he now sets ;  
 The gate of Good will be closed, Evil alone will spread itself  
     abroad.  
 The dominion of the Turks is over ;  
 In Algiers none of the faithful remain ;  
 Woe to her beautiful port !  
 Woe to her walls !  
 Woe to the glorious city ! Woe to her masters !  
 It is to-day as if they had never possessed thee.  
 Thou art become the habitation of Christians ;  
 They have driven away the true faith, and its defenders ;  
 They have destroyed thy baths, thy mansions, and thy  
     gardens.  
 It is, in vain that the seas were covered with thy ships.

Woe to thy brave Corsairs, who drove before them the  
 children of Spain !  
 Each of them returning, would bring into port a vessel laden  
 with slaves ;  
 And another, laden with nobles, made prisoners.  
 Such is the will of God. Praise be to God ! His acts are  
 inscrutable.

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“ ‘ An innumerable army arrives ;  
 The French and Spaniards cross the sea.  
 Woe to the Turks ! The light of their glory is darkened ;  
 They were the sovereigns of the world.  
 Still, doubt it not : the Christians arrive ;  
 At the sight of their thousand standards  
 Algiers will become deserted.  
 The Christian army will increase ; they will be irresistible ;  
 The mosques will be abandoned.  
 Peace reigns in the country of the Christians :  
 They are no longer disquieted ; no longer fear they the  
 Corsairs,  
 Who used to strike terror through their homes,  
 Invading their country, and returning, leading their daughters  
 into slavery ;  
 For the Captains of these Corsairs were brave.  
 All that happens to Algiers, happens by the will of God.

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“ ‘ Algiers falls into the power of the Christians ;  
 God has not permitted that His empire should endure.  
 The religion of the faithful is dead at Algiers—  
 At Algiers, which, until then, was the obstacle that withstood  
 the efforts of her enemies.  
 My eyes have seen it—I bear witness to what my eyes have  
 seen—  
 France comes to gather the harvest in our fields ;  
 The army of the Christians draws nigh with great power,

To drive out the inhabitants of Algiers ;  
They enter by force ; the rich are plundered.  
The Turks have lost their power.  
At Algiers they adore idols,  
After having adored 'The Book' and the true faith.  
Such is the will of God ! Praise be to Him ! That which  
He does, is above our comprehension.  
God alone has made all things ; unaided has He done it ;  
To man it is left only to praise Him.  
The resolutions of God are as immoveable as the mountains ;  
He alone has power over all men, and His power is just.  
He has no delegates—He has no equals.'

“ We were now arrived at the termination of our proposed expedition—one hundred and twenty leagues from Algiers, and eleven beyond Laghouat. No Turkish column had ever penetrated farther than Laghouat ; many Beys had been defeated there, and a column sent by Abd-el-Kader was entirely destroyed. Our Goum considered, and with reason, that our march so far inland, without any attempt to attack us, was sufficient proof of our power. We had no interest to induce us to go further ; the heat was becoming intense, and grass and water were diminishing. I might have returned by the Ouled Naïl, but that tribe, not feeling sufficient confidence in us, would probably have taken to flight had we attempted to encamp among



them. I therefore preferred retracing the route by which I had come, where I was certain to meet with plenty of water, and probably a sufficiency of wood and grass.

“I had heard, about six days before, that the tribe of the Ouled Sidi Chikh had preached a religious war, and that Morocco was supporting Abd-el-Kader with powerful troops. Tedjini confirmed this true and important intelligence, and I had also received information that the events of the West had caused Colonel Eynard's column to be directed upon Tiaret, instead of upon the Djebel Ammour, as had been originally intended. It therefore appeared to me advisable, under these vexatious circumstances, to give special support to the Government of the Kalifa, and also to revise and complete what had been done. Accordingly, on the 31st we returned to Reg, where the pools of the Mzi were already becoming dry. The heat was intense, the thermometer standing at 104 degrees in the shade. On the 1st of June we arrived at Laghouat: there I received a letter, dated May 23rd, from General de Bar, who commanded the division of Algiers, in which he informed me that Morocco was

making preparations for war, and desired me to hasten my return.

“The Kalifa, when he had destroyed Abd-el-Kader’s garrison, had taken a piece of cannon, which he shewed me, and which, if appearances had not been so threatening, I might have brought back with me; but I thought it advisable to leave it with him, partly in order not to add to the difficulties of his position by an act of apparent distrust, and also to preserve to him, in case of necessity, the moral and physical advantages arising from the use of artillery.

“On the 2d, after a painful march of eight leagues through a deep sand, we reached Tejmout. There we concluded all the arrangements respecting the administration of the country, and I dismissed the Kalifa, and all the other chiefs. On the same day I received a letter from the Governor-General, dated Dellys, May 23rd, ordering me to repair as soon as possible to Tiaret, on account of the wār with Morocco. On the 3rd we passed through the defiles of Debdeba and Kourfa. We were ignorant of what was going on in the Djebel Ammour, no chief having come to meet us. I there-

fore marched into these passes with great caution, having the ground carefully reconnoitred for a long distance by the Goum ; for it was evident that, if an attack was meditated, the most favourable spot for it would be the broken ground of the Djebel Ammour. From the entrance, as far as Macta Sidi Bousied, the mountains form several long defiles, which can only be passed in single file, and which would, of course, greatly increase the length of our column, with its convoy of 1400 beasts of burden. I therefore pushed on as far as the river Zierek, a march of eight leagues.

“ On the 4th we were at Macta Sidi Bousied. The chief of the Ksar, Zenina of the Ouled Nails, came to our camp and assured us that all was quiet in his neighbourhood. No messenger came from the Ksar, Sidi Bousied, of the Djebel Ammour, although we were close to their corn-fields. On the 5th we arrived at Mkraoula, on the plain, had no longer any danger to apprehend ; and at Taguine, which we reached on the 6th, we considered ourselves in greater safety than we could have believed it possible to have been in the Meteedjah a few

years ago. We had only thirteen men in hospital ; six of the cases were from injuries of the feet. I found the garrison of Taguine in excellent order ; we halted there one day, and on the 8th we started for Tiaret. On the same day, one hundred men and animals, all our useless baggage, with the unladen camels, accompanied by the Goum of the Tell, were dispatched to Boghar. They arrived there without accident in three days—a march of thirty leagues—but it was made easy to the men, by mounting them on the camels.

“ We reached Tiaret on the 11th, having only one man sick. The heat was intense ; and to this was now added another great annoyance—we were beset by the gad-fly, the severity of whose sting is sometimes sufficient to worry animals to death. After many attempts, we succeeded in protecting ourselves from them ; but the horses and mules suffered dreadfully, and we were obliged to collect all the camels at nine o'clock, and keep them till four surrounded by fires, in order that the smoke might drive away their tormentors.

“ Having left Boghar the 10th of May,

we had marched one hundred and seventy leagues in thirty-two days, and from Bou-drine to Tiaret we had made eighty leagues in twelve days. Our marches had been rendered toilsome by the heat, the sand, and the scarcity and bad quality of the water ; notwithstanding these hardships, we did not lose a single man, horse, or mule, and two camels only died. We did not meet with a single accident, nor did we abandon any of our stores. At Zarett, the night before we arrived at Tiaret, the Harars stole two muskets, and wounded one of the soldiers. This was the only theft that was committed during our march, and the tribe to which the culprits belonged were obliged to restore the value of the muskets, besides paying a heavy fine.

“ Not a single complaint has been brought against our soldiers, and their discipline has excited the admiration of the whole country, who were accustomed to see the camps of the Beys and of Abd-el-Kader plunder the gardens, the corn-fields, and all who could not defend themselves. At Aouéta our bivouac was close to the dilapidated walls of gardens full of fruit-trees, vegetables, ripe corn, and

barley. Although we were greatly in want of wood and forage, yet the rights of property were strictly protected. At Tejmout, where we first appeared, all the authority of the Kalifa was scarcely sufficient to calm the fears of the inhabitants and prevent their quitting the place ; but when they found that we paid for all we required, and that no one was ill-treated, they no longer meditated flight, but, giving us every proof of confidence, received the soldiers with a cordiality which I had never before witnessed in any part of Algeria."

## CHAPTER XII.

The shops and shopkeepers of Algiers—Dress of the *Jewish* women—Their beauty—Moral condition of the Jews in Northern Africa—Moorish woman—Ride over the Boudjareeah—Gardens of the Dey—Hospital—Country house of the British Consul-General—Marshal Bugeaud's arrival—Unexpected dispatch of the Mail steamer—The Packet service of Algeria—Disliked by the naval officers—Bougia—Djidljeli—Defeat of the Kabiles—Philippeville—Arrival at Bóna.

WE spent some days after our return to Algiers in rambling about the streets, and visiting those places of interest in the environs that we had not previously seen. One day was occupied in making the round of the Moorish bazaars and shops, which are generally of the meanest description, both inside and out. A few trifling articles of gold and silver embroidery from Morocco,

a dozen or two of ornamented pipe-sticks, with otto of rose and jasmin, red caps and inferior silk scarfs from Tunis, form the sum-total of the ornamental wares of the native shopkeepers. Some of the more wealthy are, however, beginning to imitate their Christian rivals, and have fitted up their shops in a transition style between French and Algerine, with their most tempting articles exposed in the windows, and the shopman, instead of apathetically smoking his pipe, seated cross-legged on the counter, stands behind it, and shuffles slipshod about, recommending his wares to a stranger's notice with as much pertinacity as the smartest shopmen of London or Paris.

In the little back streets and narrow lanes forming the upper part of the city, the shops frequented by the lower orders are merely square boxes inserted in the wall, with the side towards the street wanting. As a specimen, I will take one half way up the street leading to the Kasbah, where the united callings of a cook-shop keeper and dealer in provisions, were carried on. It was a small dark room—perhaps nine feet in width and twelve deep—cut out



of the ground floor of a dilapidated house, and rendered still darker by a shed that sheltered the open front, intercepting the greater portion of the light and air that descended into the street, through the narrow space left between the projecting stories of the houses nearly meeting overhead. A low counter occupied two-thirds of the shop, upon which was seated an old man with a straggling beard and unwashed face—a number of folds of dirty rags, that may once have been white, formed his turban, and the upper portion of his clothing consisted of a haick,\* which harmonised with the colour of his head-dress. Around him, and within reach of his hand, were a number of baskets containing vegetables, dried pease, beans, garlic, couscousoo, and other edibles; and before him, over a charcoal fire, was a shallow iron pan half full of rancid oil, that sparked and bubbled as he turned the thin cakes of flour and water, frying for a thick-lipped negro, who, clad in a gaudy cotton jacket of a splendid furniture pattern, was

\* An upper garment, a piece of white silk, cotton, or woollen cloth, a yard and a half wide, and five or six yards long, worn in graceful folds round the body.

leaning lazily against the opposite wall, watching the operation. Placed on shelves that ran round the shop were large earthen jars of oil and preserved olives; each hole and corner was a receptacle for the undisturbed debris of generations of dirty predecessors, and the air was laden with the mingled odours of bad oil and decaying vegetables. This description will answer for almost any shop of the lower class, the only alterations requisite being to replace the provisions with the articles suited to another trade, and to change the odour of the cook-shop for any other detestable smell that may be appropriate; the portrait of the dirty old shopkeeper need not be altered, as he will answer for any trade.

In the three principal streets, the Rues Bab Azoun, Bab-el-Oued, and De la Marine, the shops are entirely European, and many of them fitted up with as much taste as those of a second-rate provincial city in France. Generally speaking, articles of dress and luxury are nearly a third dearer than they are on the other side of the Mediterranean, and, as is to be expected, much of the cast-off finery of the Paris and Lyons shops is

disposed of in Algiers. Very few curious or valuable specimens of African workmanship are to be procured, for when, by chance, anything is seen, it is sent off to Paris, where anything *à l'Arabe* is the rage. In an armourer's shop we saw some of the spoils taken, or said to be taken, at the battle of Isly, but as the arms were neither remarkable for beauty nor rarity, and a very high price was demanded for them, we made no purchases.

Among the various costumes that crowd the streets of Algiers, none have such a singular appearance as the extraordinary head-dress worn by the Jewesses out of doors: from the back of the head a cone of light filagree, two feet high, rises at an angle of forty-five degrees, from which flows a long white veil that falls nearly to the ground, but leaves the face uncovered. Many of the Jewesses, when young, are strikingly handsome; like the men, they preserve unchanged the features of their race, and the dark and expressive eyes, the beautifully formed forehead, the raven hair, the arched eyebrow, and a peculiar softness of expression about the mouth, shew that the beauty of the

"daughters of Israel" has not degenerated. The Jewish children are perfectly lovely, especially the boys, who, at ten or eleven years of age, are models of beauty; after that, their features grow coarse.

Not much can be said in favour of the moral condition of the Jews in Northern Africa. They subsist entirely by commerce, and although among the higher class there are many scrupulously honest and honourable men, still, the majority will not hesitate to make money, if an opportunity offers, even in the most disgraceful manner. To all of their own nation they exercise the most profuse hospitality, and are charitable to their own poor. Education is confined entirely to the boys, who are taught in schools, and the parents usually pay according to their means; the children of very poor parents are educated gratis—that is to say, they receive just sufficient education to enable them to read the Old Testament in the original Hebrew.

The romance that we associate in our minds with the idea of the veiled beauties of the harem, would, even if it had withstood the realities of other eastern lands, vanish,

after an hour or two spent in Algiers. Nothing alluring meets the eye in the outward guise of a Moorish woman—nothing tempting the imagination to dwell with pleasure upon what may be concealed within. She has the appearance of a large bundle of dirty linen going to the wash, with a rolling, unsteady gait, having at the upper end a narrow opening, through which shines a pair of black eyes, that, for all you know to the contrary, may be the property of a great-grandmother.

Nothing was talked of in the military circles but the approaching expedition against the Kabiles, planned by Marshal Bugeaud. No particulars were known as to what was to be the extent of the force; and the arrival of the Governor-general, who had been upon leave in France, was daily expected, and looked for with impatience. I may as well mention here, that this expedition never took place, as it was disapproved of by the French government, although not until the troops had been collected, and the preparations for the campaign nearly completed.

The seaward face of the Boudjareeah, the picturesque range of hills to the west-



ward of the city, is deeply indented with numerous little valleys, and the rocky beds of the mountain streams. Country houses, once the property of wealthy Moors, are placed in the most beautiful situations, and rendered accessible by winding paths through gardens and plantations of flowering shrubs and fruit trees. In this direction there are many delightful rides; and on the 27th we set forth, under the guidance of Mr. St. John's younger son, to explore the beauties of the Boudjareeah, and visit his country residence, four miles distant from the city. Leaving Algiers by the Bab-el-Oued gate, and passing the "Fort des vingt-quatre heures" placed on a rock near the shore, flanking the north-western and eastern faces of the city, and serving also to strengthen the new fortifications now in progress, we reached the gardens of the late Dey, three quarters of a mile further on.

The garden is converted into the site of an immense military hospital, capable of containing with ease 5000 sick, who are accommodated in long buildings one story high, extending in streets across the garden. At this season there is but little sickness

throughout Algeria, and therefore the present inmates were few in number, but in the summer and autumn, large as the establishment is, it is not sufficient for the wants of the army. Where the new buildings do not interfere, the beautiful groves of fruit-trees have been left, as far as possible, without injury, and shady alleys of magnificent orange trees, mixed with flowering shrubs, plentifully watered by the crystal springs of the Boodjareeah, afford, even in the hottest summer's day, a grateful change to the enfeebled convalescent, wearied of the tedious monotony of the sick ward.

The situation is admirably adapted for the purpose to which it is applied. Placed at the foot of the steep ascent of the Boodjareeah, and on the sea-shore, towards which the ground gently inclines, lying as it were, with outstretched arms and open bosom, to woo each cool refreshing breeze, that, in the stifling heats of summer, calms the wild throbbing of the burning brain, and stills the impetuous current boiling in the veins of the fever-stricken patient, who, as he feels the cool north wind that plays about his wasted frame, knows that a few hours

since it swept across the plains of France, his own loved France; his sunken eye gleams with recruited strength, and hope once more returns, with cheering thoughts of home, of friends, and life.

Instead of taking the main road that wound up the hill to our left, we followed a rough path that skirted the sea, passing a small fort erected at the water's edge called "Fort des Anglais." After half an hour's ride in this direction, we began to ascend the heights by a narrow track that crept up the side of a rocky valley, through thickets of evergreen shrubs and flowering creepers, mingled with the aloe and the cactus. Wishing for rather a longer ride, we passed Mr. St. John's house, and then mounting still higher, made a circuit, and descended to it by the banks of a small stream of clear water.

As considerable additions were making to the house, preparatory to the summer, we did not see it to advantage, but the carefully kept grounds and gardens were flourishing in all the beauty of early spring. The views of the house from the different points in its neighbourhood, and from its terraces, are



beautiful. Built half way up the steep sides of the Boudjareeah, and embosomed in trees, the white walls glisten in the sun, seen here and there between the masses of bright green foliage, variegated by the dark unbending forms of a row of aged cypresses. From a walk in the garden, partially trelliced, over which was trained a profusion of roses, with the jasmine and the passion flower, the prospect was lovely. The side of every little valley had its villas, trees, and gardens, not a cloud dimmed the sky, and the wide expanse of the Mediterranean, calm and unruffled as the heaven it rivalled, drank in the brilliant sunlight but to restore it with a tenfold splendour from its glassy surface.

We returned to Algiers by a middle route, and then rode round the new fortifications, entering the city by the Babazoun gate. The evening passed as the two preceding ones had done, most agreeably, at Mr. St. John's. A gun fired between eight and nine announced the arrival of the steamer with the Governor-General and his suite, who did not land, but passed the night on board.

Next morning we were awakened at six

o'clock, by the batteries saluting the Marshal, and at breakfast we received a note from Mr. St. John, informing us that a levee would be held at noon, when, if we desired it, we might be presented. At eleven o'clock we were taken by surprise at hearing, that, with his accustomed celerity, the Marshal had ordered that the steamer, which was not to have left Algiers for Bône till mid-day on the 31st, was to be despatched immediately, and that, if we missed this opportunity, we must remain in Algiers for another twelve days. Fortunately our passports had been left some days before at the Police-office; and, thanks to the kindness and exertions of our friends, who succeeded in obtaining permission for us to embark at the last moment, after several other applicants had been refused, we were at one o'clock on board the war-steamer, the "Tenare."

We had now time to inquire what was the reason of this sudden dispatch of the mail-steamer three days before her time, and learned that ammunition was to be sent to Philippeville, for the use of the Constantine column, which was intended to act from that side against the Kabiles; a detachment of

troops was also to be embarked for Bougia. As I have before mentioned that this much talked of expedition did not take place, it may suffice to state, that Marshal Bugeaud intended to enter Kabilia from the west at the head of a strong force, whilst two other columns entering simultaneously from the south and east, would co-operate with him in overrunning the country.

We were received with attention and civility by the officers of the steamer; and the captain had assigned us berths before we presented a general letter of introduction, which the admiral commanding on the station had been kind enough to give us, to the captains of the vessels employed on the African packet-service. The arrangements on board these vessels, for the convenience of civilians who may be led either by business or curiosity to visit the shores of Africa, are very indifferent. Naval and military officers are provided with free passages, join the mess of the officers of the ship, and have berths set aside for them; but the unlucky civilian is only permitted to take a deck passage, for which, however, he is not charged very extravagantly, and, wrapped up in his cloak

with the deck for a bed, and his carpet-bag for a pillow, he passes two, three, or more days in an agony of sea-sickness, wretched, helpless, unpitied, and in every body's way, with the satisfaction of knowing, that the worse the weather is, the longer he will be exposed to it. A cabin under the poop is appropriated to the passengers, for their meals, which are furnished by a restaurateur taken on board for that purpose.

This service is much disliked by the officers of the navy; and to a smart, active commander, desirous of keeping up the discipline of his ship, is a very vexatious one. Making every month, on an average, six trips to and fro, with the deck lumbered with men, women, and children, troops, stores, and baggage, it is impossible that the duties of a ship of war can be properly carried on; and the greatest credit is due to those who, under these untoward circumstances, keep their vessels and crews in the state of order and cleanliness they exhibit in harbour.

Owing to the quantity of ammunition to be shipped, 48,000 musket-cartridges, it was four o'clock when the "Tenare" weighed

anchor ; and steaming steadily across the Bay of Algiers, with a light breeze in our favour, and a smooth sea, Cape Matifou was rounded before dusk. At ten at night, we were off Dellys, the mail-bag was landed, the one for the eastward taken on board, and we continued our course.

Early next morning we were on deck ; a light haze hung over the surface of the water ; not a breath of air was stirring ; a long streamer of curling smoke spread itself sluggishly along our wake ; and a thin curtain of gauze-like vapour covered, but did not conceal, the mountainous shores of Kabilia.

As the sun rose higher in the heavens, the fog dispersed ; and standing close in under the land, we sailed past the rocky and inaccessible precipices of Cape Carbon, a promontory jutting from the almost perpendicular mountain of the Gouraya, which rises, crowned by a fort, to the height of 2200 feet above the level of the sea, with deep water within a few yards of the shore. Huge masses of rock, worn by the action of the winds and waves into a thousand fantastic forms, rise from the sea, and cling to

the mountains' sides, covered in places with thick brushwood, affording shelter and food to troops of monkeys. Through the centre of a rock projecting from the eastern face of the Gouraya, the waves have worn a lofty arch, under which, in calm weather, a boat can sail. As we rounded the cape, the town of Bougia, lying on the slope of the mountain behind it, came in view, and anchoring, to land the troops we had on board, we went on shore at ten o'clock.

Bougia was formerly a place of great trade, and of considerable importance, although its port, which scarce deserves that name, is exposed, and the anchorage bad. In former days, its principal trade consisted of large quantities of olive oil and bee's wax, brought down from the neighbouring hills by the Kabiles. The export of the latter article for the manufacture of candles in Europe, was so great, that in the course of time, the name of the town, called by the French "Bougie," was applied to the article it produced; and hence the origin of the well known word "bougie."

A powerful city at the period of the decline of the Roman empire, it fell suc-



cessively under the dominion of the various invaders of Africa. After having been possessed for centuries by the descendants of the Saracenic conquerors, it was seized in the early part of the sixteenth century by Spain, who was forced to relinquish her conquest, after having held it for nearly fifty years.

Charles V. put in here after his disastrous defeat before Algiers, and strengthened the existing fortifications. In 1833, Bougia was attacked and taken by a French squadron, the fire of the three forts being speedily silenced, and a landing effected; but the Kabiles, who had come down from the Atlas to defend the town, fought desperately, retiring from house to house as the French advanced; and it was only after a reinforcement had arrived from Algiers, that, at the end of four days' hard fighting, they remained masters of the town.

The town itself, with the exception of the Kasbah, and the other forts built by the Spaniards, is an immense ruin. Many of the habitations were destroyed at the period of its last capture; and the inhabitants having deserted it, the hand of time, even

in the short space of twelve years, has done the rest. Numerous remains of the Roman city have been found; and not very long ago, the upper portion of a female statue, of tolerable workmanship, was dug up. The foundations of the Roman wall are still to be seen; and running up the side of the Gouraya, are the walls of the Saracenic city, enclosing a large extent of ground covered with shapeless heaps of ruins overgrown with grass, rank weeds, the cactus, and the aloe. Part of the sea-face of this wall remains in better preservation; and on landing, the town is entered by a ruined gateway, probably the principal one of the ancient city.

To the south of Bougia, lies a rich and fertile plain, watered by the Ouled Bou-Messaoud, a considerable stream rising in a valley to the south of the lofty Djebel Jurjura. A circle of blockhouses, at the distance of three quarters of a league, and commencing with the fort perched on the summit of the Gouraya, extends around the town, and encloses the French territory in this part of Algeria. Except with a very strong party, these lines cannot be left, with-



out danger ; and even then it is not safe to proceed far, as a single Kabile will conceal himself for hours to get a fair shot at a party on their return. At present, the powerful tribes in the vicinity have patched up a hollow truce with the garrison, so that they are not now so harassed with constant attacks as formerly ; but they are still not the less prisoners within their lines.

At eleven, we were again on board ; and Bougia, with its picturesque site—its rocks and ruins, festooned with a luxuriant growth of creepers—its new barracks, and its deserted town—its conspicuous café, and its mouldering arch, soon merged into a shapeless patch of white and green, as we continued our course along the coast to Djidjeli, where we arrived at three, P. M.

The hour allowed us on shore, was ample time for seeing everything. It is a wretched little town, with good barracks, defended by loop-holed walls just finished. A reef of rocks extending into the sea, forms an exposed anchorage, with only depth of water, near the town, for small Mediterranean trading-ships. Upon one of the islands of this lighthouse has been erected. Some

fragments of columns lying near the gate, and a few shapeless masses of masonry, are all that remain of the Roman town of Igilgilis. The only remarkable passages in the history of Djidjeli are, that it was the first spot in Africa occupied by the famous brothers, the two Barbarossas ; and that, in 1664, Louis XIV. attempted to form there a French settlement, when the foundations of the fort that defends the town and harbour were laid. The settlement did not answer the expectations that had been formed of it, and was in consequence abandoned.

The situation of the garrison here is the same as that of Bougia, only with the drawback that the circle enclosed by the blockhouses is more contracted, and that, if possible, the inhabitants are on worse terms with their neighbours the Kabiles, who have not, however ventured to attack the town since a bloody and signal defeat they suffered three or four years ago.

One night, favoured by the darkness, a strong force of Kabiles passed unobserved through the line of blockhouses, and reached a ledge of rock jutting out into the sea, and commanding the town, from whence they

fired upon the sentries, and at the windows of the houses. The troops were got quietly under arms, and the commandant, leaving a few men on the walls to return the fire of the Kabiles, sallied out with the garrison, came upon their rear, and enclosed them between his force and the sea. The Kabiles were attacked ; no prisoners were made, no quarter given ; there was no escape ; many found in the sea that death they were endeavouring to avoid from the French bayonets, and scarcely a man escaped. The spot was pointed out, and the attack described to us by an officer who had been present during the affray.

Next morning, the 30th, at two o'clock, we were off Philippeville. During the night, a heavy sea had arisen, and it was with some difficulty that the ammunition was landed. We did not go on shore, as we intended returning and staying a day or two at Philippeville, and at that early hour we should have seen but little. At eight o'clock, we continued our course, and landed at Bôna at five in the afternoon.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Kabilia and the Kabiles—Origin and history of the latter—  
Their Personal appearance—Government—Language—  
Religion—Marabouts—Habitations—Agriculture—Manu-  
factures—Enterprise and industry—Attachment to their  
native land—Their arms and method of warfare—Domestic  
relations—General character.

IN the preceding chapter mention has been made of the Kabiles, a people, of whom, although but little is known, and that little does not offer those exciting changes, those alternations of misfortune and prosperity, that give such spirit to the records of other nations; yet whose history, barren though it be of great events, possesses a peculiar interest in itself.

By Kabilia is meant those ranges of the Lesser Atlas, that extend along the sea-coast from the eastern limit of the Meteed-

jah to near Philippeville, a distance of three degrees of longitude ; and where France, at present, possesses only the sea-ports of Dellys, Bougia, and Djidjeli. Buried in the depths of these mountains, defying successfully all efforts made for their subjection, the aboriginal inhabitants of Northern Africa have found in the Atlas an impregnable fortress, where, from the period when fabulous tradition gave birth to history, down to the present moment, generation after generation, have preserved inviolate their independence \*.

The Kabiles, or Berbers, as they are indiscriminately called, form a race perfectly distinct from the Moors and Arabs, and, as far as the absence of certain proof will warrant, must be considered as the descendants of the nations dwelling along the Southern coast of the Mediterranean at the time of the foundation of Carthage by the Phœnicians, 886 B.C. ; or, going still further back,

\* The Kabile tribes are spread over the whole range of the Lesser Atlas, from Morocco to Tunis ; but as, in the eastern and western portions, the mountains being more accessible, they are partially under the rule of the French, I have marked out the limits of what we may call Kabilia Proper, as above.

if Sallust's account of the invasion of Africa, by an army of Asiatics, whose leader was afterwards deified under the name of Hercules, be credited, they are probably derived from the remnant of the earlier inhabitants, who sought refuge from their powerful invaders in the wild valleys of the Atlas. By degrees, as the power of the Carthaginians increased, they spread themselves along the coast, as far as the Straits of Gibraltar; but, contented with the possession of the sea-ports, and a limited territory around each, the independence of the mountain tribes was not attacked. After the Roman conquest of Africa, and during the protracted struggle ending in the destruction of the Numidian power, the Kabiles, distinguished from the Numidians by the name of "Barbari," remained unsubdued. The fierce inroads of the Vandals, whereby the cities of Africa were laid in ruins, were unfelt by the Kabiles. Even the Arabs never penetrated their inmost valleys as conquerors; and although in process of time the faith of Mahomed became the religion of the Kabiles, they remained free. To the Turkish rulers of Algiers they never submitted. To

the French authority, when attempted to be exerted over them, they have offered the fiercest opposition; the hatred they bear towards the enemies of their independence, is increased by feelings of the wildest fanaticism towards the enemies of their faith, and trusting, as of old, to the natural defences of the country, and their own desperate but untrained courage, they will not lose the freedom which they have enjoyed for nearly 3000 years, without a long and bloody contest.

Procopius, a Byzantine historian of the sixth century, makes the Kabiles descendants of the nations driven by the Israelites out of the land of Canaan, and who, emigrating westward, became the first inhabitants of Northern Africa; he, moreover states, that a column was still to be seen at "Tigisis," bearing an inscription in the Phœnician language to that effect. There are traditions of the same kind existing among themselves, and the Kabile historian, Ebn-Khal-Doun, who wrote in the fourteenth century, derives the Berber nation from Ber, the son of Mazigh, the son of Canaan. Some of the Arab tribes, who despise, although at the



same time they fear them, give the Kabiles a genealogy not the most flattering, stating them to be the children of genii by Arab women, whom they had stolen and carried off into the mountains.

In person the Kabiles are of the middle size, slight and well made, possessing great strength, activity, and powers of endurance; their features are less strongly marked than those of the Arabs, and their general appearance is vivacious and intelligent. Like the Arabs, they are divided into tribes, frequently at war with each other on the most trifling pretexts, yet a common enemy proves at once a bond of union. Each tribe is governed by a Sheick, who is usually chosen from the principal family in it, either on account of his wealth or talents. He commands them in time of war, and, during peace, if he is supported by the marabout, has an absolute control over his people, who, however, are not bound to him in any way, and can depose him if found incompetent, by selecting another Sheick.

Their language, which they call "Shouvia," is general to the Kabile nation, though several

dialects are spoken among the tribes ; it is not only totally different from the Arabic, but no affinity can be traced between it and any other language, ancient or modern, with which we are acquainted. The common opinion seems to be, that the "Shouvia " is derived from the Phœnician ; but every attempt hitherto made, to establish a connexion between them by means of what little is known of the ancient tongue of Carthage has failed, so that, with a greater probability of being correct, we may consider the present language of the Kabiles as co-existent with themselves, and to be that of the aboriginal inhabitants of Northern Africa. Arabic is spoken by the greater number of the tribes as a foreign language ; yet there are many who, having but little communication with the plain, speak only their native tongue.

The population of this portion of Algeria, in the absence of any fixed data, is estimated at 80,000, which will give a force of only about 16,000 men capable of bearing arms ; to which we may add 4,000 boys and old men, who would be able to take part in a defensive war. The Kabiles must not be

confounded with those Arabs who have left the plain, and imitating to a certain extent the Berber mode of life, have built huts and formed villages on the lower slopes of the Atlas, although the Moors include all the inhabitants of the country under the general appellation of Bedoueens.

Their religion is, nominally, Islamism, with which many ancient superstitions are mingled, relicts of the worship of their ancestors, who adored the heavenly bodies and the elements. Their fanaticism is in proportion to their ignorance, and the commands of a marabout are obeyed without a murmur, as the will of God. These marabouts, or holy men, are more numerous than among the Arabs, and held in greater esteem, although generally not so well educated. They pass a life of hardship and austerity, devoting themselves entirely to meditation and the worship of God, and interfere in worldly affairs only for the purpose of doing good. Under the protection of a marabout, a Kabile may pass unharmed through the midst of a hostile tribe; and in the event of feuds, they are the general

peace-makers. Some \* of the more distinguished profess to have the power of working miracles, the gift of prophecy, and even the privilege of receiving the divine commands from God himself; a French writer well describes the position they hold in the minds of their followers by the sentence, "Ce sont des saints vivans, placés par l'opinion, entre les hommes et les anges." It is worthy of remark, that the absolute power they possess is rarely if ever abused. Many of them are wealthy, as they receive the offerings of the people, who consult them on all occasions, and the office of marabout generally descends in the family when any of its members are inclined to follow the profession. In this case the career of the candidate for sanctity is greatly facilitated, a certain portion of holiness being considered as hereditary, and the son is held at once in the same veneration as his father, to acquire which for himself would have taken years of rigid austerity.

When a marabout dies, the spot where he

\* The following remarks apply equally to the marabouts of the Kabiles, Arabs, and Moors.

is buried partakes of the sanctity with which the holy man was invested during his life; the body is placed in an oblong wooden case, carved, and ornamented with patterns in red and green, the two sacred colours; a square building, surmounted by a dome, is erected over the shrine, and the exterior whitewashed. If the deceased has been a saint of extraordinary celebrity, many offerings are made at his grave, which are the perquisites of some living marabout in the vicinity, who keeps the tomb in proper order. The situations chosen for these tombs, or rather sepulchral chapels, are usually the most beautiful or romantic spots; perched on a rock overhanging a river or a glen, and surrounded with groves of trees, or built on a mountain's side, so as to be visible from a great distance, they form a characteristic and picturesque feature of the scenery. We entered several at different retired places, where we were not liable to be observed, the presence of a Christian in so holy a spot being considered a desecration; but we never saw any variation in the arrangements, except as to size; they are always left open for the admittance of the faithful, who come to say their prayers, and

invoke a blessing upon themselves and their contemplated undertakings.

With regard to the many charms and superstitions of the Kabiles, there is one especially worthy of notice, and that is, their use of the symbol of the Cross, to which they impute many unknown virtues, using it as a talisman, inserting it among the ornaments carved on their weapons, &c., and sometimes having it tattooed on their persons, as a preservative from the much dreaded evil eye. We are ignorant whether the Kabiles, as a nation, ever professed Christianity; but it would seem from this, that at least the outward forms of the early Christians had at one period penetrated into the heart of their mountains.

In their own country they exhibit an industry that we may look for in vain amongst the Moors and Arabs. Their low huts, although small and mean, are generally built of stone and lime, or of sun-dried bricks, and surrounded with well-kept gardens, orchards, and corn-fields. Besides the lower parts of the valleys, they cultivate the steep faces of the mountains, forming terrace above terrace, by means of sustaining walls.

They also irrigate, wherever it is practicable. Their vineyards and olive-gardens are carefully cultivated, and the oil taken to market in skins, forms, with the hides of their numerous flocks of cattle, sheep, and goats, the principal articles of their commerce.

They manufacture their own weapons, agricultural implements, knives, gunpowder, coarse cloth, and pottery. They have mines of iron, lead, and copper, which they work themselves; they understand the method of smelting the ore; their workmanship in metal, although rude, is very fair, considering the tools they employ; and as a proof of their ingenuity, they have succeeded in imitating the French five franc pieces in base metal well enough to deceive the Arabs who have not been in the habit of seeing much French money.

In one point there is a strong resemblance between the Swiss and Kabile character. Devotedly attached to their native mountains and their tribes, they are imbued with a spirit of enterprise that leads them in youth to seek their fortunes in other countries. They are to be found in all the towns and villages of Northern Africa as domestic ser-



vants or labourers; they are industrious, good-tempered, and honest, living in the most parsimonious manner, wearing their clothes, through economy, until they drop to pieces from age, and exerting all their energies to amass a sum of money with which to return and pass the remainder of their lives at home.

Whilst absent, their attachment to their native land and their tribe is such, that the instant a Kabile learns that war has broken out, or that danger threatens, he throws up his situation, however lucrative it may be, allows no consideration of self-interest to interfere with what he looks upon as his imperative duty, and, regardless of distance, sets forth to aid his tribe. An instance of this, with reference to the proposed expedition against the Kabiles, which was now openly talked of, occurred in Bóna, a day or two before we arrived. A labourer, who had been for some time in the employment of a French officer who paid him liberally, came to his master and gave him notice that on a certain day he must leave his service. The officer asked his reasons for wishing to go away: was he dissatisfied with his wages?

with his treatment? or was the work too severe?—to all of which he answered that he was perfectly satisfied, but it was quite impossible he could remain, as the French were going to attack his country, and he must join his tribe to assist in repelling the invaders, but that, when the fighting was over, if he were not killed, he would return to Bôna and resume his work.

The arms used by the Kabiles are guns from six to seven feet in length, pistols, and yataghans, nearly all of their own manufacture. European fire-arms are much valued, when they can be procured. Having few horses, their principal strength consists of infantry, but in the open plain their undisciplined courage is of no avail against regular troops; they charge with fury in a disordered mass, and if repulsed, disperse instantly to rally again at a distance, never waiting to receive an attack if they can possibly avoid it. When defending their own fastnesses the case is very different: they then become determined and formidable enemies; every foot of ground is obstinately contested: each separate rock and bush in a mountain pass conceals an enemy, and

forms a petty fortress ; the invading column, perhaps, succeeds in forcing a passage, and then the Kabiles, dispersed but not beaten, attack the rear with the same vigour with which, an hour before, they opposed the advance of the enemy. A day's march is a continued combat, and miserable is the lot of the wounded, the sick, or the straggler, who falls into their hands : no mercy is shewn ; if the prisoner's life be spared for a time, he suffers at last a painful death ; but a yataghan, placed under the throat and drawn upwards, whilst the head is pressed down with the left hand is the prisoner's usual fate, and the severed trophy is borne off in triumph.

When a Kabile of the lower class returns to his home, he considers that he has fully attained the object of his existence if his savings provide him with a wife (her price averaging about a hundred and fifty francs), a "gourbie" or hut, his arms and a supply of ammunition, a spade, a mule, or two asses, and that indispensable safeguard to every Kabile hut or Arab tent, a dog ; if, in addition, his habitation is built of stone, and he possess a horse, a yoke of oxen, and a

plough, he has arrived at the summit of his wishes. Although still eager to make money, it is, when he has done so, of little or no use to him, except in case of unforeseen misfortune, and buried, for security, in some safe spot, the existence of his treasure is a secret confined to his own breast, and often a secret which he dies without revealing. He values his arms more highly than all the rest of his property, and, if reduced to poverty, the last article that he parts with is his gun. The social condition of women among the Kabiles is rather superior to that of the Arab females ; they are never veiled, live more on terms of equality with the men, and although they work hard, their labour is shared by their husbands.

The lights and shadows of the Kabile character are strongly defined. Passionately attached to their native mountains and their tribe, and having lively, social dispositions, they are inhospitable among themselves, and jealous of strangers ; brave, trustworthy, and easily contented, they are cruel and avacious, but every feeling yields in intensity to their unconquerable love of independence.

Few travellers have given any account of

this people from personal observation in Kabilia, and of late years, as at present, the country is closed to Europeans by the well-founded fears of the inhabitants : even Arabs have not escaped, as it is not long since a party of Arab traders, supposed to be in the French interest, were all murdered.

I now conclude the sketch of this remarkable people, and it only remains to be observed that the materials from which it is taken are the accounts of the travellers who have written upon them, carefully collated, and the results of the information I took every opportunity of collecting on the spot, from the French officers who had traversed some parts of the country with a military force, and from those whose residence in Algeria had led them to investigate the history and customs of one of the most remarkable nations in Africa.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Bôna—Destroyed in 1832—Defence of the Kasbah by You-souf and Captain d'Armandy—Square and streets—Kasbah—The Foreign Legion—Fort Cigogne—Maltese—Party at General Randon's—Ride to the ruins of Hippo Regius—Its ancient history—St. Augustin—His monument—Ancient harbour in the Seybouse—Why it should be reopened—Government stud—Forest of the Djebel Edough—Storm and Shipwreck—Quarantine absurdities—Arrival at Tunis.

ON the western side of a gulf formed by the Capes de Garde and Rosa stands the town of Bôna, with its eastern face built on the extreme edge of the precipitous coast that extends round the Cape de Garde, and terminates with the rocky promontory that, crowned by the Fort Cigogne, forms the southern angle of the town. Enclosed within walls nearly a mile in extent, flanked by numerous square towers, Bôna is rapidly rising from the heap of ruins to which it had been reduced in 1832 by Ben Aïssa, who

commanded the troops of the Bey of Constantine in an attack against the town and Kasbah. Ben Aïssa succeeded in obtaining possession of the former, and plundered and burnt it when foiled in his attempts against the latter by the chivalrous and gallant daring of Captain d'Armandy and the celebrated Yousouf, who, with the small force of thirty sailors from a brig of war, threw themselves into the Kasbah, then held by a garrison of Turkish soldiers for Ibrahim, the late Bey of Constantine, who professed to hold it under the French Government, but had deserted his post. In a few days the Turks mutinied against their new commanders, who, with the French sailors, would have been murdered, and the Kasbah given up to the Arabs, but for the prompt action and fearless courage of Yousouf, who on discovering the plot, killed the two ring-leaders with his own hand in the ranks, and then placing himself at the head of the terror-stricken mutineers before they had time to recover from their astonishment, led them against the enemy, defeated the besiegers, drove them from the ruins of the town, and this caused the very men who in



the morning had conspired against his life, to obey his orders with a slavish submission ; a proof of what may be accomplished by the unhesitating resolution of a single man.

On landing, we went to the " Lion d'Or," a comfortable hotel in a street branching off from the Grand Square, where, being Sunday evening, the greater part of the population were assembled around the band of the battalion of the Foreign Legion that formed the garrison of Bôna. Next morning we had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of General Randon and M. de Soubeyran, the chief military and civil authorities of the district.

During the afternoon, we took a long walk, commencing with the town, which contains nothing very remarkable. A handsome square with a fountain has been laid out in its centre, and, besides some smaller ones, three well-built streets of French houses lead to three out of the four gates. The destruction of the greater portion of the Arab town, in 1832, has left few of the old streets standing ; those that have escaped are narrow winding lanes of mean looking houses. Three-fourths of the buildings are French ;

and a mosque in the square, with a graceful, slender minaret, and the crenelated walls, too slight to mount artillery, except of the lightest kind, are the principal remains of the old town.

Passing out of the north gate, opposite to which, on the slope of the hill, are the cavalry barracks with their ranges of stabling, and near them a well stocked park of artillery, we ascended the steep hill upon which the kasbah is built, overlooking, and completely commanding the town, at a distance of four hundred yards, and having an elevation of three hundred and forty feet above the level of the sea. From the ramparts, we had a beautiful and extensive view over the rich plain of Bône; a dead level of bright green, with two distant clumps of trees rising like rocky islands from a sea of grass, ten leagues in length and five in breadth, bounded on the north by the Mediterranean, and enclosed by a semicircle of lofty mountains stretching southward from the coast. The ground-plan of the Kasbah follows the oblong form of the plateau on the summit of the hill, and the walls are flanked by the usual square towers, which, as

well as the defences of the town, have been thoroughly repaired by the French.

The present garrison consists of a battalion of the second regiment of the "Légion Etrangère," a force of nearly five thousand men, composed of adventurers, deserters, and escaped criminals of all nations. Recruited from such materials, it must be expected, that it is only by severe punishment and stringent regulations, that discipline can be preserved. There must be an exception made in favour of the Poles, who form an entire battalion, the best conducted, and the most distinguished in the Legion. Wherever it has been employed, the Foreign Legion has been conspicuous for its reckless bravery, and in many instances, for its ferocious conduct towards the Arabs. The men composing it are generally, in person, finer looking than the average of the French infantry of the line, especially the Italians and Spaniards. In their ranks, there are only two or three Englishmen, and they belong to the first regiment, now quartered in the province of Oran. The officers are chiefly French, with the exception of a few Poles, who served in the last

revolution of their country. Very few who join the Legion as privates ever attain the rank of officer.

Descending the hill of the kasbah, we re-entered the town, and proceeded to Fort Cigogne, placed on a rock jutting out one hundred yards into the sea, protecting the anchorage, and forming a small harbour on the southern side of the town, for boats and coasting vessels. Hanging about the landing-place, were a number of Maltese, who, more than half African by descent and language, swarm about the ports of Algeria, Tunis, and Tripoli. A large proportion of the boats that ply between the shipping and the shore, belongs to them; and if not employed as boatmen or porters, they enter into various petty trading speculations: traversing the country with a few pieces of cotton, cloth, and coarse cutlery. They are hard-working, industrious rogues, who will cheat you if they can in the way of business, never speak the truth, and are quarrelsome and vindictive, often using the knife as a final argument to settle their disputes.

We dined with General Randon, and

Bôna boasting of eleven ladies, (a number many of our Indian stations could not muster,) a large party assembled in the evening, which passed most agreeably with dancing, music, and cards. The house has not been long finished, the rooms are well proportioned, and the principal saloon is a handsome apartment, appropriately furnished with the joint produce of France and Algeria. Its polished parquet of African oak, from the neighbouring forest of Edough, is half covered with a profusion of lion and panther skins; and the walls are decorated with a variety of weapons, and with lances bearing the national colours of France.

At eleven o'clock next morning, General Randon's horses were at the door of the hotel; and leaving the town by the Constantine gate, outside of which the Arab market is held, we rode along the sea shore until we arrived at a Roman bridge of thirteen arches, crossing the river Boudjemah, a mile from the town. Passing the bridge, which is in perfect preservation, we soon found ourselves on the site of Hippo Regius, a city at one time second alone to Carthage, and now her equal in ruin and



desolation. Built on the declivity of an oblong hill, rising from the plain, and washed on either side by the rivers Seybouse and Boudjemah, the city sloped gently down towards the sea. The soil was fertile; the scenery beautiful; and, easily accessible by land and water, a finer situation could not have been chosen for the residence of the ancient sovereigns of Numidia.

But little remains of its former magnificence: a few shapeless masses of concrete masonry, hewn stones, and foundations, scattered over, or buried beneath the soil, and the huge cisterns, once supplied with water by an aqueduct from the neighbouring range of the Djebel Edough, are all that time has left of the palaces of its kings; of the fortifications that withstood Genseric and the Vandals for fourteen months; and of the churches where St. Augustin raised his powerful voice against the increasing corruption of the Christians of the fifth century. Captured by Genseric, A. D. 431, after a lengthened defence by Boniface; who, deceived into rebellion, had sought the assistance of the Vandals, and then, seeing his error when too late, was unable to save

Africa from the ruin he himself had caused ; retaken by Belisarius, after an interval of a hundred and two years, the city was, at the end of the seventh century, taken and utterly destroyed by the Arabs. The ruins have served as a quarry, from whence the materials employed in building the present town of Bôna were supplied.

Much interest attaches to Hippo Regius as the scene of the labours of its bishop, St. Augustin, and of his death, at the patriarchal age of seventy-six, in the third month of the siege by the Vandals. An upright, conscientious man, living at a corrupt and licentious period, and zealous in the cause of religion, he was revered and beloved by all. When his episcopal city was besieged, the spirit of the aged bishop rose with the emergency ; he strengthened and consoled his now repentant friend Boniface, the cause of all the evil ; and toiling unremittingly amongst his people to mitigate their sufferings from the enemy, and from famine, he sank under the fatigue, and his latter days were like a waning lamp, whose flickering light shines brightly with a dying effort, and expires. With a laudable motive,



but with the worst possible taste, a sort of altar tomb has been erected by the French in the midst of the ruins, to his memory. Ugly as it is, placed in such a lovely situation, it would have passed without remark, but for the means adopted to identify the modern tomb with the departed saint. In the year 500, the African bishops, exiled by Thrasimund, king of the Vandals, carried the relics of St. Augustin, seventy years after his death, with them to Sardinia. They were afterwards taken to Italy; and in 1843, some French bishops, unable to procure the whole body, which its Italian possessors would not part with, were obliged to be content with the left arm, which was brought over and deposited, with great pomp, in a grave dug amidst the ruins of the ancient city, and the tomb above-mentioned erected over it.

Luxuriant gardens and orchards cover the sides of the hill, and the mouldering remnants of the cisterns where the arches have given way, are picturesquely clothed with shrubs and creepers; many remain in a tolerable state of preservation, and are used by the inhabitants of some adjoining hovels as stabling for their cattle. Returning to

the road leading to Constantine, and sweeping round the base of the hill, we arrived at the Seybouse, where the embankments of the Roman port are to be traced for a considerable distance. The river has still from fifteen to twenty feet of water at this point, and runs sluggishly over a clayey bottom; but a shifting bar of sand and mud at its mouth obstructs the navigation. It is evident that the sea was formerly several hundred yards nearer the city, and that the annual deposits of the Seybouse and the Boudjemah have been gradually extending the limits of the coast. The capabilities of this river seem to have been completely overlooked by the French government, the channel over the bar, even at the driest seasons, has seldom less than ten feet of water; and the expense of deepening the existing or forming a new entrance to the port would not, probably, exceed the value of the ships and cargoes that are annually lost upon the coast of Algeria, where a secure harbour is not to be found. As a small naval station, and as a commercial port, it would conduce greatly to the prosperity of the Province of Constantine; the

forests of Edough are full of magnificent oak timber, the undisturbed growth of ages, the native tribes in the vicinity are becoming more accustomed to their new masters, or at least are now quiet, perceiving the uselessness of struggling at the present moment, against the hated yoke; and by the strong arm of military authority, stretched over the fertile and extensive plain of Bôna, corn and cattle, the staple productions of the district, are steadily increasing under the system of forced tranquillity that is maintained. Lead ore has been lately discovered near Guelma; the specimens brought in by the Arabs are rich in metal, and they state that the ore lies close to the surface and could be easily worked. European colonists have already commenced cultivating the land in the neighbourhood of the town on the banks of the two rivers; and as the confidence of the settlers increased, they extended their circle, so that there are now farm-houses three and even four miles from Bôna, when a few years ago the walls of the town were considered to be scarcely sufficient protection. For all these reasons, the re-opening of the



ancient port of Hippo Regius would be an immense advantage; a secure harbour would be formed for vessels of a considerable size, more easily defended against a hostile squadron than the open roadstead of Bône; foreign merchandise would be landed direct, and the produce of the province shipped with ease on board vessels lying alongside the quays of the Seybouse.

Extending our ride for some distance along the road to the interior, we passed the buildings lately erected for the stud to be established by government, with the object of improving the breed of horses among the Arabs. With this view, the stud is to consist of stallions only, as the degeneracy of the present breed in Algeria is mainly to be attributed to the neglect shewn by the Arabs with regard to the choice of a sire, considering the breeding of the dam to be of much greater importance. The demand for horses of a superior class is likewise so great, that the price offered frequently tempts the owners to sell them and content themselves with those of an inferior description. Although they will not part with their mares, the tribes are thus dis-

possessed of the more valuable animals, and are rendered year after year, less and less capable of breeding fine horses.

There are to be three establishments, one in each province, and the entire expense is to be borne by government. The officer who is to be placed in charge of the stud at Bôna, has received orders to proceed to Tunis for the purpose of purchasing; he is authorised to give an average price of 2000 francs per horse; a sum that ought to purchase the finest animals in the Regency.

After having cantered over the plain, we re-crossed the Boudjemah, and passing the western side of a circular marabout, which, commanding the passage of the bridge, has had its walls loopholed, the body of its holy inmate tumbled into the river, and now makes a capital guard-room, we rode through the rich swampy land lying between the sea and the base of the wooded mountains of Edough. Once carefully cultivated, successive ages of neglect had rendered this fertile spot, subject to the inundations of the Boudjemah, a pestilential morass, of which only a small portion was under cultivation at the period of the capture of Bôna by the French. A

canal has been cut, and other means resorted to, with success, to drain it, as is shown by the improved healthiness of the town, and by the country-houses built or building in the centre of flourishing gardens in its vicinity. On reaching the road, constructed by the troops, leading from Bôna to the Djebel Edough, we turned our horses' heads homewards, and passing a marble column erected to commemorate the opening of the road, and inscribed to General Randon by the troops employed on the work, we entered the town by the North gate. The rest of the day I spent on foot, rambling leisurely over the ruins of Hippo, and, lying on the thick soft turf that covered the vaulted roofs of the ancient cisterns, stretched beneath the sheltering foliage of a venerable olive, I enjoyed and sketched by turns the splendid prospect before me.

During the afternoon the small steamer, that, placed at the disposal of the French Consul-General, keeps up an uncertain communication between Tunis and Bôna, had arrived. It was necessary that we should decide upon our future arrangements, as two routes now lay before us. One was to take



advantage of the return of the "Liamone," and proceed to Tunis, returning to Bône by land, and then visiting Constantine, &c., on our way back to Algiers; or else we were to travel first through the province of Constantine, and either await the next trip of the steamer, hire a small coasting-vessel that might be ten days or a fortnight on the voyage, or find our way by land to Tunis. A council was held, the pros and cons of the two schemes fairly stated, and the first was, for many reasons, decided upon. There was, however, one drawback; and that was, it involved the loss of our friend the Count de Goltz, whose engagements would not allow of extending his journey to Tunis.

The magnificent forest that covers the Djebel Edough, which every stranger ought to visit, we agreed to leave until our return, and occupied the next day by a long walk to the other side of the Cape de Garde. Passing by the aqueduct that, repaired and improved, now supplies the town with water, we walked through the "Pépinière," an establishment on a smaller scale, and having the same object in view, as the Experimental Gardens at Algiers. Keeping in a north-



westerly direction, we reached the summit of the hill, the highest point on the Cape, and from whence the sea was visible on both sides, with Fort Gênois and a marabout, where a holy man, of great sanctity, lies buried, placed on the rocky promontory. The Arabs have named it "Ras-el-Hamrah," or the "Red Cape," from the rocks and soil being in many places tinged with that colour by the presence of iron. Three marble quarries, worked by the Romans, are still to be seen, with partially detached blocks and columns, rough-hewn on their sides; the marble is white, veined with pale bluish grey, and a slab I saw in Bôna was close-grained, and had received a fine polish. We descended the hill on the opposite side towards the sea, and returned homewards by the coast, which is defended by Fort Gênois and two batteries; near one of them is an extensive barrack, at present unoccupied. Standing in the sea, a gun-shot from the shore, is an isolated rock called the Lion of Bôna, from the extraordinary resemblance it bears to a colossal lion, couchant and crowned.

The wind, which had been gradually rising during the afternoon, now blew with violence, and the tideless Mediterranean, yesterday so still and calm, murmuring softly as its gentle undulations touched the shore, now dashed its roaring waves against the cliffs, and in its fury cast high in air a mingled cloud of spray and foam. On nearing the anchorage, we observed two merchantmen dragging from their anchors; they fell foul of each other, and for a moment their destruction seemed inevitable; they were driving fast upon a rocky shore, no assistance could be afforded them, as two boats had already upset in the attempt, and in another minute it would have been too late, when, succeeding in getting some sail set, they swung clear, rounded Fort Cigogne (the brig so closely, that, for a breathless moment, we imagined she had struck), and ran on shore in the shallow harbour under the fort. A small barque, whose crew deserted her the instant there was any danger, also went on shore, and several boats were wrecked. One life only was lost; and the three ships, although much damaged, were got off in a day or two.

Fortunately there were very few vessels in the roads, or the loss of life and property might have been severe.

The little *Liamone* getting up her steam, was forced to run for shelter under the cliffs of Fort Gênois, where there is better holding ground. At one time it was feared she would be lost, and the quarantine officers were in a dreadful state of excitement, as, coming from Tunis, she was in quarantine, and any personal communication, such as saving the life of a drowning man, would subject those who pulled him out of the water to a purifying imprisonment of nine days; or if any of the crew who might escape in the confusion entered the town, Bôna, its inhabitants, authorities, and garrison, would all become unclean; any communication for the space of nine days would have placed Algiers itself in the same state with regard to Europe: and this serious inconvenience, this stoppage of all business, public and private, arising from such a trifling cause, only seems the more ridiculous, when we consider that Tunis is healthier than Algeria, that there the plague has been unknown for more than a quarter



of a century, and that an unrestrained intercourse is kept up by land between the two Regencies, so that a traveller, actually infected with the plague, would be received unquestioned if he kept his own counsel and journeyed by land, while, if he arrive by sea, having been exposed to the fresh breeze for days, he is carefully examined by a doctor, whose learned head shakes mysteriously at the sight of a furred tongue, or a bruise received the last tumble he had from his berth ; and even if, after all, warranted sound and in good condition, he is, to make sure, locked up for nine days.

Never was the uselessness of the stringent quarantine laws, at present enforced throughout the Mediterranean, better shewn than in the case of Algeria. As an important colony, it was found that her intercourse with France, thus clogged, could not be satisfactorily carried on, either by the Government or private individuals. By degrees the period of quarantine was reduced, and then abolished, leaving, however, the power of resuming the system, in the event of the plague, or any other disease of the same nature, breaking out in Algeria. It is to

be hoped, now every effort is being made to facilitate the intercourse of nations, that England will follow the example set by France, and that together they will relax the present regulations, so absurdly severe, and relieve the commerce of the Mediterranean from the incubus that weighs so heavily upon it. The stumbling-block in the way of any improvement in the system, is said to be the Italian states. To them it is a matter of profit and loss, and not of health. Their governments make money by it, and the quarantine establishments provide numerous places for a set of greedy officials.

On the 4th of April we took leave of our Bôna friends, and embarked at two o'clock on board the "Liamone," the small Government steamer previously mentioned, of fifty horse power, originally built to run on a river of the same name in Corsica. Count de Goltz had left for Constantine the previous day, to make the same journey that we accomplished on our return from Tunis. The passengers, consisting of the officer in charge of the Government stud, ordered to Tunis to purchase horses, a veterinary surgeon, and twenty dismounted dragoons, half

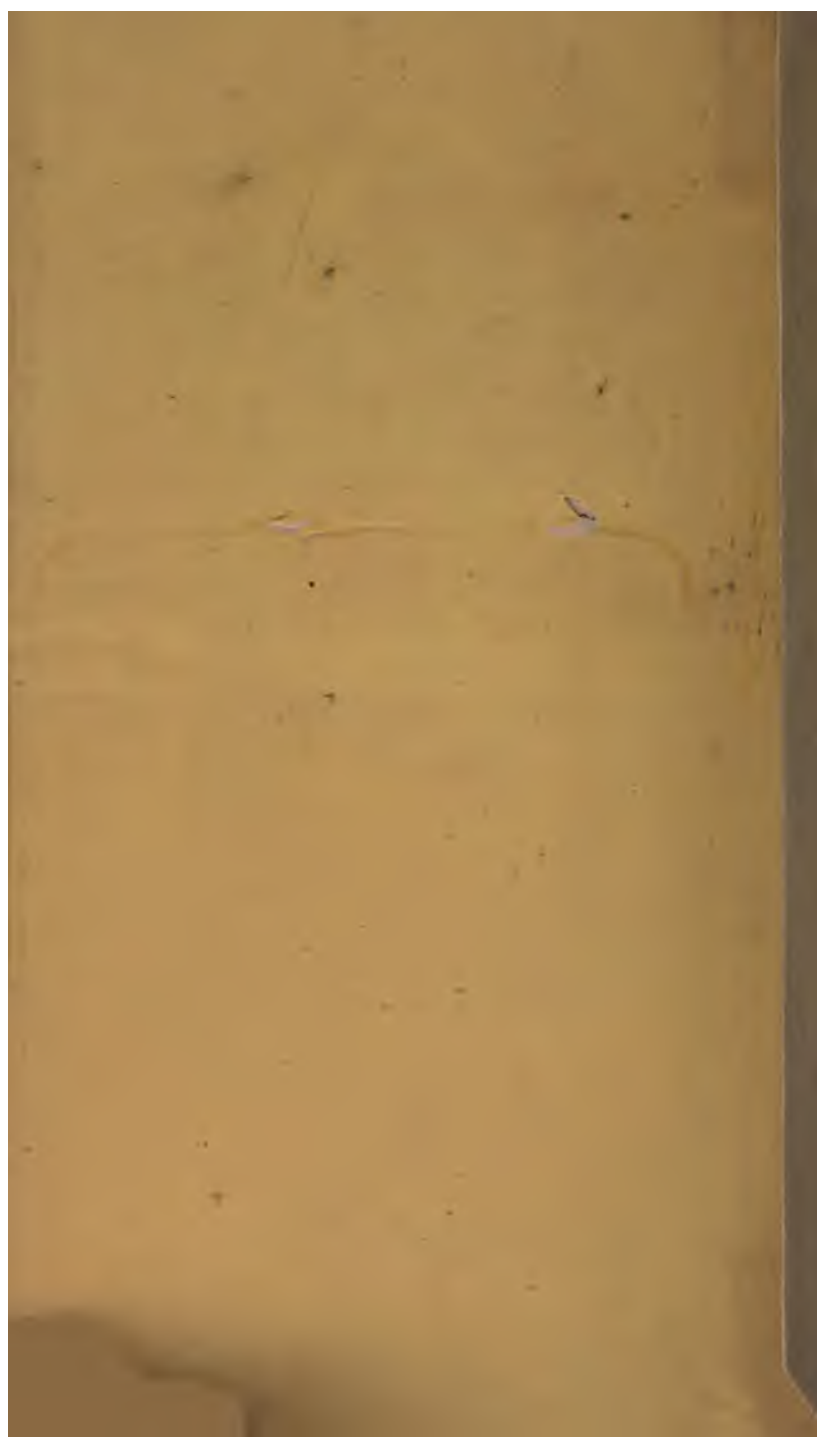
a dozen civilians, and ourselves, filled every corner unoccupied by the officers and crew. The captain and officers gave us berths, and most kindly invited us to become their guests while on board.

The weather looked threatening, and an evidence of the storm of the 2nd still remained in the long swell rolling sullenly towards the shore, on the heaving surface of which our little vessel pitched and tossed, straining fretfully at her cable, as if impatient of the delay. At half-past three we weighed anchor; during the night the wind freshened, and came right ahead; steaming along slowly, at eleven next day we were off the Fratelli Islands, and made Cape Blanc, the most northern point of the Regency of Tunis, at two P.M.; at sun-set we made Cape Zebib; and, rounding Cape Carthage at six o'clock on the morning of the 6th of April, anchored in the roads of Tunis.

END OF VOLUME I.









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